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SELECTIONS  
FROM THE  
SPEECHES AND WRITINGS  
OF PROMINENT MEN IN THE UNITED STATES,  
ON THE SUBJECT OF  
ABOLITION AND AGITATION,  
AND IN FAVOR OF THE  
COMPROMISE MEASURES  
OF THE LAST SESSION OF CONGRESS,  
ADDRESSED TO THE  
PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,  
BY THE  
UNION SAFETY COMMITTEE.

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NEW-YORK:  
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1851.



*Fellow-Citizens of the State of New-York :*

BY a resolution of the UNION SAFETY COMMITTEE, the undersigned were appointed a Special Committee to disseminate Union sentiments through this State, by means of the public press and the circulation of public documents.

We accordingly ask leave, respectfully, but earnestly, to invite your attention to the sentiments and views, the arguments and advice contained in the following extracts from the speeches and writings of some of the leading public men and prominent citizens of our country, without distinction of party, on the all-important subject that has so long occupied the public mind.

You will find, in this summary, allusions to important facts which may have escaped attention. You will read the legal opinions of eminent professional men ; and you will perceive the apprehension and anxiety entertained by statesmen long trained in the councils of the nation ; nor has it been thought inappropriate to add a voice from the pulpit.

The dangerous excitement upon the subject of Slavery, which fanaticism originated, and which a species of infatuation has extended far and wide, still threatens the peace and safety of our Union.

To such an alarming extent have misrepresentation and delusion spread throughout our land, that the fraternal ties which link together our happy confederacy appear no longer to possess their magic charm to maintain the constitution in its integrity, and uphold the union of these States. We know that the great body of the people in every State are devotedly attached to the Union ; yet we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that the people of our State have permitted their honest judgment to be misled and their generous sympathies to become enlisted, by specious appeals to their feelings against the system of Slavery that has existed in the Southern States since the formation of our government.

Slavery, as you know, was introduced among us by accident, and existed in this State, and in almost every other State, at the

formation of our original compact. When our constitution was framed, the system of Slavery was recognized, and the rights appertaining thereto defined and established; and the conventions of each State promised and agreed to abide by these terms with hardly a dissenting voice. Without this recognition our Union could not have been formed;—unless it be acknowledged and continued, that Union cannot be preserved.

You will not therefore consider it right or just to interfere with vested interests and chartered rights. You surely cannot desire, by so doing, to incur the awful risk of severing this confederacy, which the patriots who achieved our independence established, after so much labor, anxiety, and toil: on which Providence has so long vouchsafed its choicest blessings: and which, if once destroyed—and no power but ourselves can accomplish its destruction—can never again be reinstated or restored. Yet you are aware that the spirit of Abolition requires that Slavery shall be abolished, and its votaries endeavor to seduce the slaves from their allegiance, while they call on you to give them aid and protection, although our constitution provides that fugitives from service shall be returned to their owners. Those whom you have been accustomed to consider as teachers and leaders have designated this article of the constitution in language that we do not desire to repeat. You have also been told—so, at least, it is reported—that it is in violation of divine law that a fugitive slave should be surrendered, and that Slavery has no constitutional guarantee that may not be released, and which ought not to be released, for that conscience interposes a higher law than the constitution. Are you disposed to think thus lightly of our bond of union? Do the citizens of this State really believe that they have a right to judge for themselves what part of the national compact they will observe and abide by; and what portion they may evade or reject? Is this doctrine reconcilable with the dictates of good faith? Is it in accordance with the principles of public law? You must bear in mind that no man has yet appeared, capable of suggesting any practical plan or remedy for the evil of Slavery; the efforts of fanaticism therefore can have no object in view but the forcible abduction of the property of others, and the creation of strife and discord between citizens of the different portions of our Union. Are you willing then to break the bonds of our confe-

deracy by such means, in the vain attempt to remove this one evil, from which we at the North are exempt, which we all feel and know is without practical remedy, and which is felt only by our brethren of the South, who are compelled to bear the infliction without being answerable for its origin. But supposing it were possible to abolish Slavery in the United States, have you thought of the inevitable consequences that would follow? A system of service that has existed for ages, and which involves a thousand millions of dollars in value, could not be subverted without inflicting lasting injury upon every interest in our country, by disturbing all the relations and interfering with all the products of labor. Do you think, by abolishing Slavery, you would promote the happiness of the slaves themselves? or that emancipation could be accomplished consistently with the interests or security of the "Free States." You will admit that in many States, if the slaves were emancipated, they could not remain where they are, for when they ceased to be slaves they must necessarily, from their superior numbers, become masters, or try to become so, and Abolition would hardly venture to avow a design of reserving such a fate for those of our brethren who happened to become owners of slaves from having their lot cast in a portion of the Union where slave labor was productive.

Perhaps, however, it is supposed that the three millions of emancipated blacks could take up their abode in the free States. Ohio has already refused to the slaves whom one owner had liberated, "a resting place for the soles of their feet," and Ohio sends abolitionists among her representatives in Congress; but all the free States, New York among the rest, would be compelled, in order to protect the labor of their own citizens, to reject as denizens these objects of misguided humanity. But what is the real condition of the slave himself whom Northern Abolition desires to emancipate? In all the slave States the law requires that their owners shall take care of their slaves during life—in sickness and health, in childhood and age. The slave is thus free from all care for the day or the morrow; in health he is cared for, in sickness and in age provided for. All the evils, therefore, whatever they may be, that arise from Slavery, and all the burdens which it imposes, are and must be borne exclusively by the South, leaving the North without a

pretext or a shadow of reason or of right to interfere in their domestic relations. Suppose the South, in aid of our efforts, and in the same spirit of *disinterested* philanthropy, should send to our State, at their own expense, all their diseased, infirm and aged slaves, for whom they had no further use, would our philanthropists welcome them,—would they ask you to receive them? or would they not rather counsel you to reject them, in self-defence, unless their regard for your interests should prove to be on a par with the respect which, according to their doctrines, they have manifested for your understanding.

But you are told that the fugitive slave law is odious to free-men, and cannot—must not be enforced.

You are aware that when Colonies, New York and the Eastern States entered into an agreement of a similar character to the article in the Constitution for the delivery of fugitives from service. In 1783 the ordinance establishing the North-Western Territory, which excluded Slavery, contained the same provision for the surrender of slaves from the other States. The act of Congress of 1793 was but a recognition and enforcement of the same principle; and the act of 1850, rendered indispensable in consequence of the impunity with which slaves were abducted or assisted to escape from their owners, was merely designed by a few additional guards to accomplish the same ends; and if a separation of these States should take place to-morrow, a similar agreement would have to be made, as a matter of absolute necessity, unless philanthropy should determine that war must be waged in order that property in slaves should exist no longer. Are we then, of the present day, better and wiser and purer than our revolutionary fathers?

But you are unwilling to become slave-catchers. How, and in what way, are you required to become so? Officers, empowered by law, are the parties to perform that duty. It is only when a law is *resisted* that the citizen may be called on to lend his aid in support of magisterial authority. Resistance to any law of the land is a wrong against society and good order—and any citizen may be required to assist, if his assistance should become necessary, in upholding the supremacy of the law.

What protection does the Union afford to the owners of slaves if the Constitution is to be disregarded by evading that article which was inserted for their benefit, at a time when the co-ope-

ration of the Slave States made us a nation? Can you then suppose it possible that Abolition and Agitation can pursue their course, and our confederacy continue united by the ties that originally bound us together?

But the vain boast is often uttered, that at the North we possess wealth and numbers, and all the essential ingredients of strength and power. It is so—and these now form integral parts of our national edifice of might and glory. “Then in the consciousness of our strength let us be just,” not only to others but to ourselves : for if we break up the confederacy, our tower of national strength will be restored to its original elements, as they existed before our Constitution was adopted. We shall stand exposed as separate, weak, discordant communities, ready, and, in time, sure to become belligerent States—a burthen to ourselves, and exciting the scorn and pity of mankind.

But it is said the troubled waters of Agitation are tending to repose, and that all will soon be quiet. Look, we beseech you, as an evidence of the spirit that still prevails, to the late proceedings in our Senate Chamber, in the language used by a Senator from the West against the late adjustment in Congress : and in the ominous silence that followed his invective, until the Senator from this city delivered his indignant reply. Look at the proceedings in the Assembly, and see that body repeatedly and perseveringly refusing to pass resolutions approving the adjustment of the exciting and dangerous subjects that so long agitated the nation, and expressing the sense of your representatives in favor of upholding the law of the land. Even those resolutions, that were first deprived of all their force and appropriate meaning, and which left open the door for future agitation, were also rejected by the majority of that body, in proof of their opposition to the compromise of peace.

In the words of Henry Clay, the more dangerous class of disunionists are those who, disavowing a desire for the dissolution of the Union, adopt a course, and contend for measures and principles which must inevitably lead to that calamitous result.

You must not forget, that after the late compromise measures had passed—those healing measures which, it was fondly hoped, would remove all farther cause of excitement—the perturbed spirit of Abolition refused to be pacified, although a nation sought repose ; for, as if to prove that Agitation was to be renewed at a



more convenient season, motions were made in the Senate to introduce the Wilmot proviso, and to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia. The present calm, therefore, is but the result of necessity, produced by that wholesome powerful corrective which is beginning to be felt in a conservative public opinion: but that corrective must continue to be applied, for Agitation, by its own confession, only awaits a more auspicious period to pursue its headlong course. “ *The judgment of the people is sound, but the danger is, that if the people permit themselves to slumber in fancied security, politicians and philanthropists of the legislative hall, the stump, and the press, will talk and write us out of the Union. There are influences that never sleep, which are creating and diffusing a public opinion, in whose hot and poisoned breath, before we perceive our danger, the Union may melt like frost-work in the sun.*”

Fellow-Citizens, we must prove to our sister States that New York will abide by the compromises of the Constitution—that her patriotism is not selfish but national—that her philanthropy is not fanatical but practical—and that she will frown indignantly on all attempts to oppose the laws, or endanger the peace of the Union; and be assured, once for all, that Agitation must cease, and the late compromise measures, founded as they are on the compromises of the Constitution, be faithfully observed, or this Union will be dissolved.

We, of the North, will have broken the compact of our fathers, and these United States may then bid farewell forever to all their greatness.

It is for you then to say, whether this great State will lend its name and influence to further and promote the objects of disunion; whether you are willing to sacrifice the glory we have acquired—the happiness we enjoy—and the prospects the future has in store: that Abolition and Agitation may run their course—that demagogues may flourish for a season—and that Fanaticism may triumph, in the end, over the ruins of our Republic.

JAS. D. P. OGDEN.  
MORRIS KETCHUM.  
E. K. COLLINS.  
CHAS. M. LEUPP.  
ISRAEL CORSE.

*EXTRACTS from the Proceedings of the Union Meeting at  
Castle Garden, October 30, 1850.*

[From the Speech of JAMES W. GERARD.]

The object of this meeting is to ask your *ratification* and endorsement, after they have been discussed, of the *peace measures* passed at the last session of Congress, in regard to the delicate and dangerous question of slavery, the great subject of the day. You all know, that Northern *abolitionists*, banded with Southern *disunionists*, for ten long months paralyzed legislation; the wheels of government were motionless, and the friends of the Union stood in awe at the audacity of those who struck at its sacred ties. Abolition members and Southern disunionists, (goaded by continual attacks upon their slavery institution,) who are, in their destructive *principles*, as wide asunder as the poles, united together in the common cause of breaking asunder this glorious Union. Then was it that the *real* patriots in Congress threw off their party shackles and sectional prejudices, and *Whig* and *Democrat*, as well from the South as from the North, disregarding the shackles of their party relations, sectional prejudices and personal considerations, threw themselves into the breach, and, by their united energies, devised and carried those measures of *compromise* at which the whole nation rejoiced—which gave peace to Congress and confidence to the people, and set again in motion the wheels of government. Nobly did they do their work; but scarcely were the troubled waters lulled, when the malcontents from the North and South, uneasy spirits, who would rather “rule in hell than *serve* in heaven;” who only rise into notice on the scum which they create by their own agitation, immediately revived the discussion of the slavery question in most offensive shapes, and sought to throw fresh firebrands into Congress. This proceeding, you will find, gives rise to *three* resolutions, which will be offered for your approval. First, to *honor* those patriotic members of Congress who, at great personal sacrifices, shoulder to shoulder, fought for those bills which settled these dangerous issues; and among the names of the men thus honored, you will find that the *North* and the *South*, the *Whig* and the *Democrat*, are alike honored in the resolution.

The *next* will be one to *condemn* the patricidal conduct of those members as a class, both from the North and from the South, whether Whig or Democrat, who wished to rekindle the fires of discord, which had just been extinguished.

The *third* Resolution will be to support with all the power and energy of this great city, those measures of *Peace* and *Compromise* which were so happily passed. This land *must* have Peace. We must lay these unruly spirits. The Southern States

believe that their very existence, and the security of their lives and their property require it. We *guarantied* the compromise to them, and let us in good faith fulfil that *obligation*.

The crowned heads of Europe and their counsellors, look with deep interest upon this conflict among ourselves. Oh ! how they will rejoice if our Republic should fall from a plethora of its own greatness, and the fabric of the model Republic should crumble into ruins. But no, the crowned heads and the enemies of Republics in the Old World shall be disappointed, for we will send forth from this, the great commercial capital, the great heart of our country, a voice for the *Union* in which the whole land will join in general chorus, and ring the death-knell of the *abolitionists* and *trading politicians*, who have brought our Union to a fearful peril.

One of those peace-measures was the *Fugitive Slave Bill*, which has been so shamefully misrepresented by lying *agitators*, to those who are not informed as to its provisions. This bill of the last session, is nothing more than an *amendment* to the Act of 1793, which Act was based upon a clearly expressed clause in the *Constitution*. This bill of the last session gives no *new* right to the claimants of runaway slaves. I give you the assurance of my private and professional word, that it has not superseded the law of 1793, which is still in force, nor extended its principle, but is merely an *amendment* to it, by allowing a hearing before United States *Commissioners*, and for greater convenience, imposing heavier penalties than the former law, on those who should obstruct its execution. As I stand here before you, I declare that according to my best judgment, after a careful perusal of the law, of its scope and object, no argument can be held against its constitutionality. The Southern States did not *voluntarily* assume the relation of slavery: it was entailed upon them by their British ancestors; it was their *misfortune* to bear it, not their crime. Sixty years ago their rights of slavery were guarantied to them, as also this power to reclaim their runaway slaves, by the constitution. It is now too late to say that slavery *should* not have been conceded to the Southern States; the perfect answer is, it *was* conceded, with the *power of reclaiming* their runaway slaves. This law has not only existed, but has been acted upon for *fifty* years. Why is it then, that opposition has now for the first time been raised to the enforcement of it? Because *abolitionists* set up their destructive principles *for sale*; and *demagogues who want votes*, and *politicians who want place and power*, have bargained for, and purchased their votes and influence. Both the *Whig* and the *Democratic* parties have bid upon each other in this vile traffic of *destructive* principles and *false* issues. Thus both parties have been poisoned and corrupted, and their conservative principles abandoned by the leaders of *sections* of each. But let us make war upon them both,

and cut off the poisoned *limbs*, that we may if possible save the body from the corrupting influence. I have been a member of the Whig party from its commencement. I like my *party* much, but I love my *country* more, and before I will fight under the banners and for the *abolition* principles of *some* of its leaders in *this* State, I will see the Whig party broken into ten thousand fragments. I will rebel against their dictation, I will snatch from the hands of the unworthy standard-bearers, the banner which they abuse, and if I am alone, will wave it over my head, and stand or fall by it. I do *not* desert *them*, nor its conservative principles, but the Whig party *deserts me*, for the leaders, like the Israelites of old, in their mad idolatry, have gone *lust-ing* after *strange gods*. I will have no compromise with *abolition principles* or *abolition leaders*—we must root them up as poisonous weeds; we must put upon them the ban of *public opinion*, and drive them from our midst, as did the *Levites* the *lepers* from their cities, and we must prostrate them to the earth, and as they throw dust upon their heads, compel them to raise the cry of warning, “*unclean*,”—“*unclean*.”

As to *Free soil*, we are *all* for free soil. There is not a man north of Mason and Dixon’s line, who ever wishes to see slavery extended beyond the area *now* prescribed by law; but the God of nature, by the rugged mountains, rocky deserts, and by the climate and soil and rich vallies of our free territories, has created a *proviso* against the *further extension* of slavery, stronger than ten thousand *Wilmots* can draw.

As to slavery in the *abstract*, I do not believe there is a man north of Mason and Dixon’s line, who would not rejoice if tomorrow’s sun could rise upon the black population of the South CONSTITUTIONALLY free; for our African brother, be he bond or free, springs with us from the same mother earth, is bound with us into one common grave, and heir with us to one immortality. I believe I am a much better abolitionist than those who would mislead the colored race to their ruin. The laws to reclaim runaway slaves, must and will be strictly guarded and watched in their execution. I will with all my heart, without fee or reward, give to any alleged slave who may be arrested under the act, my services as his counsel, if he will trust me with his cause; I will defend him with all the legal skill and power I may be master of, but, if after a full hearing, the Commissioner on the *proof* pronounces against him, he and I must *submit* to the *Law*. But even then a deserving, meritorious slave shall not be without hope. I will set about buying his freedom, (but I will not go among the abolitionists for *their* subscription,) and I will contribute towards it my first fee, to make him a free and regenerated man. In *that* sense I am an abolitionist.

There are *two* other *resolutions*, which I am sure will meet the approval of all who hear me. They are, that we hold the

*ties* of the *Union* stronger than the *shackles* of *party*, and that at no future election will we vote for any candidate who is known or believed to be favorable to a *further agitation* in Congress of the slavery question, or who would countenance the abolitionists in their destructive course. I here to-night for one, renounce all *party* allegiance, where it comes in conflict with my allegiance to the *Union*. *My* motto is, my *country first*, my *party* last. I will render no *personal* subserviency to any candidate who is not sound on that subject ; I care not for the phalanx of party, as I have no political ambition to gratify. I have never bowed the knee to popular favor, I have never asked the people for their votes, I have never touched a dollar of the people's money. *My* post of honor is a *private station*.

Hereafter I will see *who* are the *conservative* candidates, not *where* they are ; and if my party gives itself up to leaders who will betray its principles, I will no longer fight under its banner, but if *need be* I will go over to the conservative branch of the old Democratic party, and with a *buck-tail* in my hat, and the tattered banner of old *Saint Tammany* waving over me, I will there aid in fighting the battle of "the *Constitution*, the *Compromise*, and the *Union*."

[FROM THE SPEECH OF EDWARD SANDFORD].

In complying with the wishes of the Committee of Management, and appearing before you, I cannot withhold the expression of my profound regret, that in this age of the republic, an occasion should have arisen for convening this vast assemblage, to do what may be in your power to avert the dangers impending over the Union of these States. When I was entering upon my manhood, the dark cloud of Nullification lowered upon the Southern States of this confederacy, and open resistance to the Federal Government was threatened, because Congress, as it was alleged, had passed laws which were not within the scope of the authority granted to it by the Constitution. The executive authority of that government was then wielded by a hero and statesman from the south, around whom every affection of my youthful heart became strongly entwined, and in that great crisis the immortal JACKSON declared those emphatic words "The Union, it must and shall be preserved." At the same period a great statesman from the north, when nobly doing battle in the councils of his country and earning for himself the proud appellation of "the defender of the constitution," uttered that imperishable sentiment, "Liberty and Union now and for ever, one and inseparable." At that time the principle of devotion to the Union as it was formed by our forefathers, was universal in

the Northern States, and he who dared to suggest its dismemberment, was regarded as guilty of moral treason.

But from whence comes the cry of nullification now? In what quarter of this confederacy is the present peril which has called you from your homes to take counsel together, and concert action for the preservation of the existence of this nation? From the north! from our neighbors around us, but not from among us. And against what does rebellion now revolt? Not against an act of Congress of questionable constitutional force of operation, but against the great basis of this Union, the federal constitution itself? By the fourth article and third subdivision of the second section of that instrument, it was agreed between the several States and ordained by the people of the United States, that no person held to service or labor in one State under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due. It is against this clause of that solemn compact that a portion of our fellow-citizens of the Northern States are now directing their open and concerted resistance, and they are practically nullifying this sacred promise of protection to the rights of their brethren at the south. But for this provision it is well known that this Union could not have been formed, and the domestic tranquillity and the blessings of liberty which we have enjoyed under it could not have been secured. And unless it be faithfully and inviolably observed, it is apparent that injustice will be done, and that sooner or later this Union will be dissolved. At the time of the formation of the constitution, involuntary servitude or slavery existed in the greater portion of the States, and it was indispensable to the security and enjoyment of this species of property in those States, that persons so held to service could not change their legal condition by passing into a state where such property did not exist, and which did not recognize any right to such property. The object of the constitution was by force of its own terms, by the paramount power of the great fundamental law, to continue the condition of servitude upon all whose lot it is to bear it, and to extend the rights of masters, so as to secure a prompt and effectual fulfilment of that condition in every State and territory of the Union, without regard to the public law or public policy of any State, or to the private feelings or opinions of any citizens of any State in respect to that relation. Its design was to prevent either the love of liberty or the hatred of slavery, the wildness of fanaticism or the reckless or mischievous love of notoriety and agitation in any and in all parts of the wide spread territory of the federal Union, from obstructing the rights of owners of slaves to secure their services in every portion of the land. The great charter of our Union creates this abso-

lute and unqualified right on the part of the owners of persons held to service who shall escape into another state, and by the terms of the compact it is equally the duty of every citizen who enjoys the protection and benefit of the federal government to see that this portion of the supreme law of the land is fairly, firmly, and fully carried into effect. Under this clause of the constitution there can be no such thing as escape from the condition of servitude, or from the obligations arising from that condition, by fleeing into the territory of a free state. When there, the constitution declares that the fugitive "shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom his service or labor may be due." It is a popular error that supposes a fugitive slave may become free by escaping from the state in which he is held, into a free state, or by any length of residence in a free state. Nothing but manumission can free him from the obligation of servitude. In whatever portion of the Union he may be found, his master has the right, under the constitution, to take him back to his service, which a parent possesses to reclaim a runaway child.

The nullifiers of this section in the constitution cannot cover their unjust and unlawful designs against the existence of this glorious Union *as it is* by declaiming against and denouncing the recent act passed by Congress, making additional provision for the restoration of fugitive slaves. So far as that act operates upon the rights of masters, it is restrictive of the broad and unfettered rights declared in the constitution itself. By force of the constitution alone, and without the aid of any act of Congress, or any of the machinery of the courts of justice, the Supreme Court of the United States have solemnly decided, that the owner of a slave is clothed with the authority in every State of the Union to seize and recapture his slave wherever he can do it without any breach of the peace.

The act of Congress of 1850, as well as the act of 1793, add nothing to the powers nor to the rights of owners of slaves, and merely prescribe evidences of claim and forms of proceedings, and provide the aid of the ministers of the law, that unfounded claims may be properly guarded against, and illegal violence be prevented. Those of our fellow-citizens who say that fugitives from service shall not be restored, array themselves directly against the federal constitution, and deliberately trample upon that which secures the blessings of liberty to us and our posterity. They claim the protection of the constitution and laws for their property, and refuse to execute provisions in behalf of their southern brethren, because they possess property of a different description. Is not this factious? Is not this dishonest? How can we ask our fellow-citizens of the Southern States, to remain in this compact of union with us, when we refuse to execute the provisions inserted in the constitution for the protection of their rights? How can we ask them to feel assured

that our disregard of the letter of the compact shall be confined to the fugitives from their service who shall escape or be inveigled from them, and that the agitation shall not be carried to their homes and their firesides?

But it is said by the agitators that the South will not, that the South cannot, that the South dare not withdraw from this Union. I have always apprehended that a practical destruction of this Union, or confederation of sovereign or independent States, was a matter much more likely to be readily achieved, than to be of difficult attainment. This Union is a matter of compact, where the continued obligation of the one party to fulfil his engagements, rests upon the continued performance by the others of those stipulations which protect his rights. Suppose five States shall say to the other States, you refuse to perform your constitutional obligations to us, and we will no longer remain in confederacy with you. We will send no representatives to your National Legislature, and no laws passed by that body shall be enforced within our limits. What is to be done? Do you say send an army and navy, blockade their ports, burn their cities, and slaughter their inhabitants? What kind of a Union will this be? Is the State which has been driven from the Union by the refusal of other States to respect its guaranteed rights, to be conquered by the federal arms, and held as a vanquished country? Are you to wage war upon your brethren because they will no longer submit to your wanton invasions of their chartered rights? No! I trust never. If force is not to be resorted to in such a contingency, what is then to be the condition of these States? The tie which unites them is broken, and each stands alone in its sovereignty. You have instructive examples of the calamities which may then befall us in the past history of the South American States. If it shall be said that new confederations may be formed, scarcely less powerful than our glorious Union, let me ask who will enter into a new constitutional compact with you, when you have refused to respect and to execute the rights created by our present charter? No, fellow-citizens, let us not look at the probable consequences of a disunion, nor the possibilities of a re-union, but rally in support of the solemn covenants of the constitution, determined to stand by THE UNION AS IT IS.

In this patriotic cause we can hold no fellowship with those of our fellow-citizens, who, believing in a "higher law," or in "no law," are friends of the Union, but of that Union in which every other citizen shall submit to their doctrines and sentiments.

There is no higher law nor higher duty of man upon this earth, under his duty to his God, than the performance of contracts, and our present happiness is put in jeopardy, and our future prospects are clouded by the apparent determination of con-



siderable numbers of our fellow-citizens to disregard the express injunctions of the constitution. I am not of the number who seem to think that this may be done with impunity.

How can these dangers be averted? First and mainly, through the ballot-box. Let no man who is not known to be firmly and resolutely opposed to all further agitation, who is not known to be an ardent supporter of the constitution and of the whole constitution as it is, be entrusted with political power. When fire-brands shall no longer be thrown from our legislative halls and executive chambers, minor agitators will soon hide their diminished heads. In politics let us know no cause but that of our country, no party but that of the Union. Let us support no nomination, come from whence it may, which does not present to us a candidate who is animated by a love for his whole country, and who is not ready to execute all its laws and maintain its institutions in their full vigor and purity. Secondly, let us reason with the deluded, let us arouse their patriotism, awaken their sense of justice, bring them out from among the unjust covenant breakers, and turn their efforts to the promotion of their country's peace and safety; and lastly, let us put the mark of disapprobation in enduring characters upon all reprobate disturbers of the public tranquillity and moral traitors to the union of these States.

[FROM THE SPEECH OF OGDEN HOFFMAN.]

I came not here as Whig or Democrat; I have not mingled much the past few years in strictly political meetings, and do not design to enter anew the exciting arena of political discussions. But when I found the Union in danger,—when I found the Constitution set at naught,—when I found the laws openly resisted—and saw our glorious Union reeling under blows from agitators at the North and factionists at the South, I felt it my duty to come forward, and stand by all lovers of our common country in this crisis of our danger. I come because I love my country more than party. Do not misunderstand me—I believe the honest men of both the great parties are attached to the Union, and intend to be faithful to the Constitution and the laws of the land: and speaking for that party with which I acted—with whose success my warmest hopes are identified and for whose triumph my best exertions shall be given, I believe that the great mass of the Whig party are, as they always have been, faithful to the Constitution, the Union, and the Laws. I come not here as the advocate of slavery: I deplore its existence, and so does every patriotic and Christian citizen in the Southern States. It is, however, no fault of theirs that it has been entailed upon them. I remember that the Con-

stitution found it there; that it recognized its existence; and but for such recognition—but for the spirit of compromise, which marked that recognition—the Constitution could never have been framed. By the same spirit of compromise alone can it be preserved. I hurry on from any of the expressions of the feelings natural to a speaker on an occasion like the present, to the more important considerations which press upon our notice. Look at what this Constitution, and the Union thereby effected, have done for our country. See our commerce whitening every sea, and the hand of industry rewarded with plenty. Standing on our own soil, we may see the bright sun rising over the billows of the Atlantic, and quenching its setting beams in the waters of the Pacific. Our land has been the home of the oppressed of all nations. It is advancing with gigantic strides to greatness, an illustrious beacon to light the way of truth and justice over all the earth. Who, that witnesses our upward career, apply typified by the flight of the noble bird we have chosen and adopted as our national emblem, would see the eagle, while soaring in his pride of place, checked in mid career and fall lifeless to the ground? Who does not remember when, at the last session of Congress, disunion was muttered in our national halls, how the throngs in our busy city, where prosperity had smiled upon every face, were filled with anxiety and alarm? At that crisis, high above the voice of faction and the clamors of party, was heard the glorious voice of Henry Clay —[at this word the enthusiasm of the audience could not be restrained, and the cheering broke out again and again]—that voice, I say, eloquent with the cheering words of patriotism, of counsel, and of hope. It seemed as if the occasion had given new vigor to his wasted frame; and casting aside alike the chains of sectional feeling and the weight of years, he advocated the claims of our common brotherhood with all the fervor and talent of his younger days. And there was another,—he of the mighty mind, who came forth from tribulation and trial at home, and threw the weight of his mighty character in favor of the Union. I refer to Daniel Webster. [Here the applause was again renewed and continued.] He had before been known as the “Defender of the Constitution,” but he has now added to this the title of “Champion of the Union.” From every part of the Union there were found true patriots, who casting aside party trammels, and party dictation, stood up manfully with these, and fought and conquered with them. I need not name those to whom I refer. The honest of all parties will long bear them in their hearts. But there is one, a stranger to you and to me, against whom, I candidly confess, I at one time entertained some prejudices, and to whom I am therefore the more desirous to render justice. He, too, like Daniel Webster, came forth from trial and tribulation at home, (for the ultraism in the

valley of the Mississippi is as dangerous as the abolitionism of the north,) and like him, perilled everything as a public man, even to his place as Senator, in defence of measures essential to the support of the Union; he is, therefore, particularly entitled to the homage and gratitude of his countrymen. I refer to Gen. Foote, of Mississippi. [His name was greeted with prolonged cheers, and the speaker then suggested that the audience should reserve their applause until the conclusion of his speech, in order to save time.] But I need not particularize each of this noble band; from the North and the South, from the East and the West, they stood up together, shoulder to shoulder, and fought manfully for the common safety; they fought and conquered, and peace once more spread her white wings over the land. But scarcely had civil dissension—that viprous worm which gnaws out the bowels of the State—been “scotched,” when the voice of disunion again broke forth, to condemn the peace measures thus designed to restore concord and harmony. At the South, the bill for the admission of California was attacked, and its authors villified, while at the North, the abolitionists, forgetting the gallant sister thus added to our confederacy, complained that every thing had been conceded, and selected the fugitive slave law as the especial object of their attack, branding all who voted for it, with the most violent epithets fanaticism could suggest. What is the purport of that law? It is the same in principle as the law of '93, passed by the fathers of the Revolution, and signed by the illustrious Washington. Do they say that this law does away with the trial by jury in the State to which the slave has fled? So did the law of '93. Is a slave liable under this law upon *ex parte* statement to be taken back to bondage? So he was, under the enactment signed by Washington, and in both enactments is the *habeas corpus preserved*. But the law which provides for the return of fugitives from justice is no less stringent. Suppose a citizen of Georgia should come here, and, after committing a crime, flee to his Southern home. He is liable by this law to be torn from his wife and children, on *ex parte* testimony, and to be dragged here for trial. But where are now the tears of the tender-hearted over the stringency of this law? But there are extradition treaties with foreign nations, by which we bind ourselves to return fugitives from justice who shall flee to us from their shores.

A fugitive from abroad who has made this country a refuge and a home is liable to be seized by process based upon *ex parte* statement, is denied the right of trial by jury, and is taken back to be tried, perhaps by a code of laws more bloody and oppressive than any to which our countrymen would submit. Are there any tears shed over his fate? Any vigilant committees appointed to protect him from the pursuer? No! all the

sympathy of these agitators is reserved for the poor slave. This professed sympathy for the poor black man's wrongs, does not extend to any practical efforts to buy the poor fugitive's freedom; it will give nothing to the Colonization Society to purchase him equal rights in Africa; it is merely a weapon in the hands of agitators, nor can they care, if in using it they sunder the cords which should unite all classes of our people in a common destiny.

[From the Speech of JAMES T. BRADY.]

These two classes—the fanatic and the demagogue—are now rivals in the bad effort to defeat a law of Congress. I mean the Fugitive Slave Law. And what is that? You have heard it well explained by my able friend, Mr. Evarts. It is a constitutional method which the general government has prescribed, by which an American citizen, in any State of the Union, may recover his property. This law is obstructed in its execution by numbers of men at the North and East. It is so obstructed by the same men who scout at the idea that anything can disturb our Union. Let us pause, reflect, and compare. We all remember the time when South Carolina was unwilling that an offensive law should be executed within her territory. I do not stop to consider any of the political questions growing out of that occurrence. At that time she had a son and a representative whose name this country can never forget—John C. Calhoun. My own political friends know well how much I honored that great and pure statesman while he lived. You are prepared to hear me declare, that I love and revere his memory. When that State thus assumed a position deemed so unwarrantable, the whole power of the general government was at once directed against her; the lead in this movement being taken by one whose course was promptly to decide and efficiently to act. That was called Nullification. What, I would ask, is the course now pursued by too many in reference to the Fugitive Slave Law? A nullification infinitely worse, because, as Mr. Sandford has told you to-night, it aims, not at a mere act of Congress, but at our great national charter. Some of you may suggest, that the opposition to this law is only individual action. I fully admit that the general government is not responsible for the acts of citizens; but this I do say, that our constitution and Union are a mockery, and our professions here a silly delusion, if we do not feel ourselves required to demand, that, in the efficient and thorough execution of the Fugitive Slave Law, the entire power of the federal government be so exercised, that no effort of an individual or a mob shall possibly prevail against

it. Unless this be done, our pretended Union is not worthy a moment's regard. It is not an affair merely of parliament. It has taken root, and it must grow and strengthen in the affections of our entire people. If any member of the confederacy be sustained in the slightest violation of our national compact, then I have no hesitation in declaring, that the sovereign State whose rights are permitted to be disregarded has a perfect right to secede. There is nothing in our covenant which can morally bind any State to remain in the Union if its constitutional rights be not preserved in their full and unqualified vigor, by the utmost power and resources of the general government.

I know that there are in this State miserable politicians of both parties, who are afraid to consider, and unwilling to acknowledge, the plain truths which I have uttered; but I for one, as a member of the Democratic party, utterly and forever disclaim connection with any man or set of men, who, from any motive or for any purpose, seek or wish to have abated, in the slightest degree, the most rigorous and exact observance of our national compact, in each and all of its provisions.

I hate the abolition party. This is not because I have any hatred of the colored race. I would be amongst the first to protect, and elevate them, if my disposition to do so were not restrained by duties much superior to the gratification of any vain or capricious fancy. I am for preserving our Union, not as a bargain merely, but as a great brotherhood of men who seek to promote the happiness and glory of mankind. We know that we scarcely possess a national character. The diversity of climate, soil, and institutions in our vast territory has separated many of our States, as if an ocean rolled between them. The founders of the constitution, aware of this fact, completed that stupendous work on the basis of compromise. They saw, as we do now, that between the South Carolina planter, and the Massachusetts farmer, there was a difference of individuality, almost as great as that which distinguishes the Irishman from the Scot. This difference has naturally created sectional antipathies which the true patriot has from the formation of our government been trying to eradicate, so that the American feeling, like the American name, should be diffused over our wide-spread territory. The fanatic and the demagogue are endeavoring to widen the breach, to increase the repulsiveness amongst those, who, exulting in a common baptism derived from a common country, should permit no geographical boundaries to make them feel or act otherwise than as brothers. The enemies of our Union base all their wicked efforts on an affected love for the blacks. They are doing what is well calculated to excite a war of races, by which one of them would surely be exterminated.

If that struggle should ever occur, I know that I speak your

settlements, in declaring, that whatever may befall, we will stand by our own race, and aid it in the fulfilment of the glorious mission for which it was unquestionably designed.

I will detain you no longer. I have strong hopes that our Union will survive the assaults and injuries it now encounters. I found those hopes on occasions like this, when men, without distinction of party, assemble to raise their voices in favor of maintaining the Union at any hazard and at every sacrifice. To do this, it is only requisite that the North and the South, the East and the West, should do justice to each other. We have but to keep our promises and observe our national contract. This meeting well indicates that our city has resolved upon discharging all its duties to the whole country. I am delighted, indeed, that such a meeting has been called—delighted that it has been so numerous and enthusiastic. To all traitors, it is the handwriting on the wall. To all patriots, the glorious bow of political promise.

[From the Resolutions adopted at the Meeting.]

3. *Resolved*, That we cordially approve of the recent measures of Congress for the adjustment of the dangerous questions arising out of the acquisition of territory under the treaty with Mexico, and that, in consideration of the various and discordant interests to be affected thereby, we hold that the compromise a fair one, and ought to be sustained by every patriot in every part of the land.

4. *Resolved*, That the heartfelt thanks of this community, and of the whole nation, are due, and on our part, are hereby tendered, to those eminent statesmen and patriots, Clay, Cass, Webster, Fillmore, Dickinson, Foote, Houston, and others, who, when they saw the Union in danger, threw themselves into the breach, disregarding all personal consequences, forgetting all party predilections, and willing to be sacrificed, if need be, for the good of the country. *Resolved*, by this patriotic devotion to their country's good in a crisis so momentous, they have achieved for themselves immortal honor, and for the Union, we trust, an imperishable existence.

9. *Resolved*, That we regard our obligation to the constitution and the Union as superior to the ties of any of the political parties to which we may hitherto have belonged, and that on all future occasions we will range ourselves under the banner of that party whose principles and practice are most calculated to uphold the constitution and to perpetuate our glorious Union.

*Extract of a Letter from DANIEL WEBSTER, of Oct. 28, 1850.*

I am led to the adoption of your 9th or last resolution in an especial and emphatic manner, by every dictate of my understanding, and I embrace it with a full purpose of heart and mind. Its sentiments are my sentiments. With you I declare, that I range myself "under the banner of that party whose principles and practice are most calculated to uphold the Constitution, and to perpetuate our glorious Union."

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*Extract from a Speech delivered by HENRY CLAY, in the House of Representatives of Kentucky, Nov. 19, 1850.*

But if it (the Whig party) is to be merged into a contemptible Abolition party, and if Abolitionism is to be engrafted upon the Whig creed, from that moment I renounce the party and cease to be a Whig. I go yet a step further: If I am alive, I will give my humble support to that man for the Presidency, who, to whatever party he may belong, is not contaminated by fanaticism, rather than to one who, crying out all the time that he is a Whig, maintains doctrines utterly subversive of the Constitution and the Union.

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*Extract from the Proceedings of the Union Meeting held at Philadelphia, November 21, 1850.*

[From the Speech of JOSEPH RANDALL.]

The important subject which now agitates the people of this country, is that of fugitive slaves and the Act passed by Congress at their last session, giving the owner facilities to claim his fugitive slave. This act is, in its spirit and principles, wise, judicious, and constitutional. It was passed at the close of the session; it may bear, upon the face of it, the impress of some haste in legislation; and in some of its minor provisions it may require amendment, but its cardinal features are just and salutary. It ought not to be expected that a whole system can be struck out at a single heat; amendments, developed by practice, will suggest themselves.

The 3d paragraph of the 2d section of the 4th article of the Constitution of the United States, provides that "No person

held to service or labor in one State, under the laws therein, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

It has been generally supposed that the introduction of this clause into the Constitution was a matter of compromise. If the term compromise implies any equivalent for, or reluctance in, its adoption, it is incorrectly used. A reference to the minutes of the convention, (page 306) will shew that on the 29th of August, 1787, this section was moved and seconded and passed unanimously in the affirmative, without amendment.

The wisest and best men this country ever produced, in the days of its primitive purity, gave it their cordial and solemn sanction. It is the product of the intellect and patriotism of Madison, Hamilton, Jay, and their illustrious compeers; and it is stamped with the approbation of Franklin and Washington.

Cotemporaneously with the adoption of the Constitution, the different Legislatures accompanied their assent with a flood of amendments. Many of them were most minute, and some of them were even subject to the charge of frivolity. The free States were at that time among the foremost in their variety of suggestions: but not a single exception was taken by any State to this provision.

But its principle may be defended without a recurrence to the authority of the patriots to whom I have referred. It enacts no new principle. Previous to the Declaration of Independence, a slave who fled from one colony to another, still remained the property of his master, and the master had a right to reclaim him. Between the 4th of July, 1776, and the 9th of July, 1778, when the articles of confederation were adopted, the right of the master remained the same. After the adoption of the Articles of the Confederation, and before the adoption of the Federal Constitution, the right still continued inviolate, not in consequence of any provision in the Articles of Confederation, but by virtue of the well-known and established laws of nations as then understood and acknowledged throughout the civilized world. Thus it will be seen that this right is coeval with the existence of slavery in this country—that it has been sanctioned by all the Colonial, State, Confederate and Federal Governments which have ever existed in the United States.

But I will go farther and state in the most broad and comprehensive sense, that it is an acknowledged principle of the laws of nations, that slaves are property, and that whenever a slave flees from one country and seeks refuge in another, the State from which the slave has fled has the right to demand the delivery up of the fugitive; and if such delivery be refused, has also the right to pursue and obtain it by force of arms. This doctrine has



the authority of the highest Courts of Judicature in Great Britain, and of the Supreme Court of the United States; and is sanctioned by the authority of the most eminent judges and civilians who ever lived in this or the mother country, including Sir William Scott and Chief Justice Marshall. It is recognised by the State Legislatures, (including Pennsylvania) who before the existence of the Federal Constitution abolished slavery; by the act of Parliament of 4 & 5 William, 1833, abolishing slavery in the West Indies; by the writers on the Civil Law; by Vattel in his *Treatises on the Laws of Nations*, (B. 2, chap. v. page 160); and by Mr. Wheaton in his *Treatise on International Law*, (part 4th, chap. I. page 339—40, id. 177 to 187.)

This doctrine has also the sanction of the authority of the two most powerful nations of the present day. The treaty of Ghent, signed Dec. 24th, 1814, provided that all territory, places and possessions, taken by either party from the other during the war, should be restored without delay. These terms did not include a claim upon Great Britain for American slaves taken by British arms during the war; but the United States affirmed that they were entitled to the restoration of those slaves or full compensation for them. It was subsequently left to the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia, who, on the 22nd of April, 1822, decided that the United States were entitled to full compensation for the slaves so taken. The government of Great Britain ratified the award, and paid to the United States the sum of \$1,200,000. And it should not be forgotten that these treaties were concluded under the diplomacy of John Quincy Adams, first as Commissioner at Ghent, and subsequently as Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe.

What is now asked from us by the Southern States? Nothing more but that we should not aid and assist their slaves in running away, and harboring them as fugitives. It is not necessary at this time to enter into a history of the manner in which the emancipation of slaves was effected in Great Britain. Mr. Wilberforce had for thirty years brought the subject before Parliament, without making the slightest impression upon either the government or the public mind. He contented himself with submitting the measure and having it decisively rejected from time to time, as often as it was presented. His conduct at the York election in 1807, towards Lord Milton, had led many to doubt the extent of interest which that great champion of emancipation himself took in the measure. Upon the accession of William the Fourth to the throne in 1830, the Tories and Whigs ran a race on this subject, in order to secure public sympathy and support. If it had been to emancipate the same number of slaves living at home amongst themselves, it cannot admit of a doubt that it would never have been consummated.

But under all the excitement in Great Britain, it never was

proposed to emancipate the slaves without a full and ample compensation to the master for the property which he held in them. British statesmen, writers, and impudent emissaries have done much to produce the present state of public opinion among the Abolitionists in this country; they have interfered most unjustifiably in our domestic affairs, but let us do them justice, they never encouraged the fugitive slave to run away, nor proposed any system of emancipation by which the master should be deprived of his property without just satisfaction. The paternity of such a measure is an honor that belongs exclusively to the American Abolitionist.

The wilful harboring of a fugitive slave is a grave offence in morals as well as law, and those who commit this offence, can exculpate themselves upon no other ground than the recognition of a higher authority than the Constitution and laws of the Union, the benefits of which they are continually enjoying, and which in all other matters they seek for their own protection. I freely admit that among the few Abolitionists in our community, are to be found the most exemplary men in private life, but their purity of character is of no value when they jeopard all that is dear to us.

The present Fugitive Bill should be honestly carried out by the Judicial authority of the country, and the exercise of that power should be strengthened by public opinion. This is the issue; if we do not cheerfully concede this ground, we violate the original Federal compact, and give the South just ground of complaint. I have no respect for the intelligence or motives of the man who will attempt to evade this question and say there is no danger, and that the free States can continue to do so as they have done and preserve the Union.

[From the Letter of JAMES BUCHANAN, Nov. 19, 1850.]

Let me then call upon your powerful and influential meeting, as they value the union of these States, the greatest political blessing ever conferred by a bountiful Providence upon man—as they value the well-being of the slave and free negro—as they value even the cause of regular and constitutional emancipation,—to exert all their energies to put down the long continued agitation in the North against slavery in the South. Is it unreasonable that the South should make this demand? The agitation has reached such a height that the Southern people feel their personal security to be involved. It has filled the minds of the slaves with vague notions of emancipation, and, in the language of General Jackson, threatens “to stimulate them to insurrection and produce all the horrors of a servile war.” Although any such attempt on their part would be easily

and speedily suppressed, yet what horrors might not in the mean time be perpetrated ! Many a mother now retires to rest at night under dreadful apprehensions of what may befall herself and her family before the morning. Self-preservation is the first instinct of nature ; and, therefore, any state of society, in which the sword of Damocles is all the time suspended over the heads of the people, must, at last, become intolerable. To judge correctly of our relative duties towards the people of the South, we ought to place ourselves in their position, and do unto them as we would they should do unto us under similar circumstances. This is the golden rule. It was under its benign influence that our Constitution of mutual compromise and concession was framed, and by the same spirit alone can it be maintained. Do the people of the North act in this Christian spirit, whilst stigmatizing their brethren of the South with the harshest epithets, and imputing to them a high degree of moral guilt, because slavery has been entailed upon them by their forefathers ; and this, too, with a knowledge that the consequences of these assaults must be to place in peril their personal safety, and that of all they hold most dear on earth ? I repeat, that this constant agitation must be arrested by the firm determination and resolute action of the vast majority of the people of the North, who are known to disapprove it, or the sacrifice of our glorious Union may and probably will be at last the consequence.

2. I shall proceed to present to you some views upon the subject of the much misrepresented fugitive slave law. It is now evident, from all the signs of the times, that this is destined to become the principal subject of agitation at the next session of Congress, and to take the place of the Wilmot Proviso. Its total repeal or its material modification will henceforward be the battle-cry of the agitators of the North.

And what is the character of this law ? It was passed to carry into execution a plain, clear, and mandatory provision of the Constitution, requiring that fugitive slaves, who fly from service in one State to another, shall be delivered up to their masters. This provision is so explicit that he who runs may read. No commentary can present it in a stronger light than the plain words of the Constitution. It is a well known historical fact, that without this provision, the Constitution itself could never have existed. How could this have been otherwise ? Is it possible for a moment to believe that the slave States would have formed a union with the free States, if under it, their slaves by simply escaping across the boundary which separates them would acquire all the rights of freemen ? This would have been to offer an irresistible temptation to all the slaves of the South to precipitate themselves upon the North. The Federal Constitution, therefore, recognises in the clearest

and most emphatic terms, the property in slaves, and protects this property by prohibiting any State, into which a slave might escape, from discharging him from slavery, and by requiring that he shall be delivered up to his master.

But, say the agitators, the fugitive slave law, framed for the very purpose of carrying into effect an express provision of the Constitution, is itself unconstitutional. I shall not stop to argue such a point at length, deeming this to be wholly unnecessary. The law, in every one of its essential provisions, is the very same law which was passed in February, 1793, by a Congress, many of whose members had come fresh from the convention which framed the Federal Constitution, and was approved by the Father of his Country. If this be so, it may be asked whence the necessity of passing the present law? Why not rest upon the act of 1793? This question is easily answered. The Act of 1793 had entrusted its own execution not only to the Judges of the Circuit and District Courts of the United States, but to all State magistrates of any county, city, or town corporate. The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, in the case of *Prigg v. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, deprived these State magistrates of the power of acting under the law. What was the consequence? Let us take the State of Pennsylvania for an example. There were but three individuals left in the whole State who could judicially execute the provisions of the Act of 1793—the Circuit Judge and the two District Judges. Two of these Judges reside in Philadelphia, and one of them at Pittsburg, a distance of more than three hundred miles apart. It is manifest, therefore, that the law in many, indeed in most cases, could not have been executed for want of officers near at hand. It thus became absolutely necessary for Congress to provide United States officers to take the place of the State magistrates who had been superseded. Without this, a constitutional right could have existed with no adequate means of enforcing it. The fugitive slave bill was passed chiefly to remedy this defect, and to substitute such officers instead of the State magistrates, whose powers had been nullified under the decision of the Supreme Court.

It is worthy of remark, that several of our Northern Legislatures, availing themselves of the decision of the Supreme Court, and under the deep excitement produced by the agitation of the Wilmot proviso, passed laws imposing obstacles to the execution of the provisions of the Constitution for the restoration of fugitive slaves. I am sorry, very sorry, to state that Pennsylvania is among this number. By our act of 3d of March, 1847, even the use of our public jails is denied for the safe custody of the fugitive; and the jailer who shall offend against this provision is deprived of his office, and is punishable with a heavy fine and a disqualification ever again to hold a similar office!

The two principal objections urged against the Fugitive Slave Law are, that it will promote kidnapping ; and that it does not provide a trial by jury for the fugitive in the State to which he has escaped.

The very same reasons may be urged, with equal force, against the Act of 1793 ; and yet it existed for more than half a century without encountering any such objections.

In regard to kidnapping, the fears of the agitators are altogether groundless. The law requires that the fugitive shall be taken before the judge or commissioner. The master must there prove, to the satisfaction of the magistrate, the identity of the fugitive, that he is the master's property, and has escaped from his service. Now, I ask, would a kidnapper ever undertake such a task ? Would he suborn witnesses to commit perjury and expose himself to detection before the judge or commissioner, and in presence of the argus eyes of a non-slaveholding community, whose feelings will always be in favor of the slave ? No, never. The kidnapper seizes his victim in the silence of the night, or in a remote and obscure place, and hurries him away. He does not expose himself to the public gaze. He will never bring the unfortunate object of his rapacity before a commissioner or a judge. Indeed, I have no recollection of having heard or read of a case, in which a free man was kidnapped under the forms of law, during the whole period of more than half a century, since the act of 1793 was passed.

But it is objected to the law that the fugitive is not allowed a trial by jury in the State to which he has escaped. So it has always been under the act of 1793, and so it is under the present law. A fugitive from labor is placed upon the very same footing, under the Constitution, with a fugitive from justice. Does a man charged with the commission of a crime in Maryland fly into Pennsylvania, he is delivered up, upon proper evidence, to the authorities of the State from which he fled, there to stand his trial. He has no right to demand a trial by jury in Pennsylvania. Nay more ; under our extradition treaties with foreign powers, does a man charged with a crime committed in England or France fly to the United States, he is delivered up to the authorities of the country from which he fled, without a trial by jury in this country. Precisely the same is the case in regard to a fugitive from labor. Upon satisfactory proof, he is delivered up without a trial by jury. In the Constitution he is placed upon the very same footing with fugitives from justice from other States ; and by treaty, he is placed upon the very same footing with fugitives from justice from foreign countries. Surely the fugitive slave is not entitled to superior privileges over the free white man. When he returns to the State from which he has escaped, he is there entitled to a trial by jury, for the purpose of deciding whether he is a freeman. I believe

every slave State has made provision by law for such a trial without expense, upon the petition of the slave ; and we have heard it announced from the highest authority in the Senate of the United States, that such trials are always conducted in mercy, and with a rigid regard to the rights of the slave.

Why should an act of Congress cast such a reflection upon the judicial tribunals of a sister State, as to say they shall not be trusted with the trial of the question whether an individual is entitled to his freedom under the laws of the State from which he has fled ?

But to allow the fugitive slave a trial by jury in the State where he is found, would, in many instances, completely nullify the provisions of the Constitution. There are many, I fear very many, in the Northern States who place their conscience above the Constitution of their country ; and who would, as jurors, rescue a fugitive slave from servitude against the clearest testimony, thinking, at the same time, they were doing God's service. The excited condition of public feeling in many portions of the North would disqualify honest and respectable men from acting as impartial jurors on such a question. Besides, the delay, the trouble, and the expense of a jury trial at such a distance from home, would, in most cases, prevent the master from pursuing his fugitive slave. He would know that should he fail to obtain a verdict, this would be his ruin. He would then be persecuted with actions of slander, of false imprisonment, and every kind of prosecution which ingenuity could devise.

The defeat of the Wilmot Proviso, and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, are all that the South have obtained by the Compromise. They asked for the Missouri Compromise, which it is known that for one I was always willing to concede, believing this would be the most just, equitable and satisfactory arrangement of the Territorial question between the North and the South. But that has passed away. California has been admitted as a State into the Union, with a positive prohibition of Slavery in her Constitution ; and whether the Mexican law abolishing Slavery be in force or not, in the remainder of our Territorial acquisitions, does any man believe that Slavery will ever prevail among the Mormons in Utah, or among the inhabitants of the snow-clad hills and mountain valleys of New Mexico ? Besides, the Slave trade has been abolished in the District of Columbia. What then of the Compromise practically remains for the South but this Fugitive Slave Law, passed to carry out a clear constitutional provision ! It is the only compensation which they have received for what they believe to be the great injuries they have sustained. Will they then patiently submit to have this law repealed, essentially modified, or nullified ? Before its passage, the Constitution had become, in regard to fugitive slaves, almost a dead letter. It is a notorious

fact, that all along the border which separates the free from the slave States, every facility was afforded for the escape of slaves from their masters. If they could pass the line, their safety was almost certain. They were scarcely ever, in the language of the Constitution, "delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." In many instances, the master or his agent who pursued them was insulted, assaulted, beaten, and imprisoned; and few men could be found bold enough to incur the hazard of such a dangerous undertaking. In this manner the Southern people were annually deprived of their property, guaranteed to them by the Constitution, to the amount of hundreds of thousands of dollars. The Constitution was nullified, and this law was passed for the protection of their constitutional rights! Will they tamely surrender it? Let the voice which speaks in tones of thunder from the United South answer this question. They will at last, I trust and believe, submit to all the provisions of the Compromise, provided the Fugitive Slave Law be faithfully executed in the North; but they will go no further. All the resolutions even of the Union meetings in the South speak this language. Future aggressions must cease, or the Union will be in imminent danger.

Let us then resolve to put down agitation at the North on the slave question, by the force of enlightened public opinion, and faithfully execute the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Law. Should this be done, it will eventually extinguish those geographical parties—so dangerous to the Union, and so much dreaded by the Father of his Country—which have sprung into existence; it will ameliorate the condition of the slaves, by enabling their masters to remove the restrictions imposed upon them in self-defence, since the commencement of the present troubles, and will restore the natural and constitutional progress of emancipation which has, in several States, been arrested by the violence of the Abolitionists.

The Union cannot long endure, if it be bound together only by paper bonds. It can be firmly cemented alone by the affections of the people of the different States for each other. Would to Heaven that the spirit of mutual forbearance and brotherly love which presided at its birth, could once more be restored to bless the land! Upon opening a volume, a few days since, my eyes caught a Resolution of a Convention of the Counties of Maryland, assembled at Annapolis, in June, 1774, in consequence of the passage, by the British Parliament, of the Boston Port Bill, which provided for opening a subscription "in the several Counties of the Province, for an immediate collection for the relief of the distressed inhabitants of Boston, now cruelly deprived of the means of procuring subsistence for themselves and families by the operation of the said act for blocking up their harbor." Would that the spirit of fraternal affection which dictated this

noble resolution, and which actuated all the conduct of our revolutionary fathers, might return to bless and re-animate the bosoms of their descendants ! This would render our Union indissoluble. It would be the living soul infusing itself into the Constitution, and inspiring it with irresistible energy.

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*Extracts from the Proceedings of the Constitutional Meeting at  
Faneuil Hall, Boston, November 26, 1850.*

[DR. WARREN'S Address.]

It is not without reluctance that I appear before this great assembly to take part in the political proceedings of my fellow-countrymen. Having from an early period of life devoted myself to professional duties, I have not entered actively into the politics of the day ; but I have never ceased to feel the deepest interest in the security and prosperity of our common country, and have ever considered, that, when these were in danger, it was my duty, as well as that of every good citizen, to devote mind and body to their protection and preservation. Such a crisis seems now to have arrived. The Union and, consequently, the existence of this nation, are menaced, and, unless there is a great and general effort in their support, we may soon behold the mighty fabric of our government trembling over our heads, and threatening by its fall to crush the prosperity which we have so long and happily enjoyed.

It has been my lot to have lived during a period when there was no Constitution and no Union ; when there was no commerce, no manufactures, little of agriculture, or of any of the arts calculated to make a powerful and happy people. It was a period when there was no sound currency, no confidence between man and man, no harmony in the action of the different states. It was a period when men's hands were turned against their neighbors, when the courts were beset with armed men, when law and justice were trampled under foot, when our best towns and villages were threatened with pillage, fire, and the sword ; when the soil was polluted with the blood of its own citizens. I remember the unorganized little band of fathers of families, who, in that emergency, issued from this place, feebly provided with arms or with the other means calculated to put down a daring and desperate rebellion. What a dark moment was this ! What dreadful foreboding arose in the minds of those



who had been expending their labor, their treasure, and their blood for the safety of an unhappy country !

But in the midst of this gloom a ray of light showed itself. A constitution was proposed, and, after a cautious investigation, and careful adaptation to the various interests of the country, was adopted as a bond of everlasting union. Under this Constitution a new order of things has arisen. Commerce and agriculture have revived. Manufactures have everywhere grown up. Education, literature, and science, have been diffused in all our cities and towns. The highest prosperity has pervaded the nation, and presented to the wondering eyes of Europe the spectacle of a federal republic, free without licentiousness, and rich without luxury.

Now, let me ask, is there any one desirous of returning to the disunion of 1786 ? Is there any one who is willing to trifle with, to spurn at, or to go behind this Constitution ? If there is, I cannot go with him. I go for the whole CONSTITUTION and the whole UNION, as the best security for the liberties of the people. FOR THESE I STAND HERE ; and if I am not ready to exert every faculty which I possess to uphold them and maintain them, I shall be false to the blood which runs in my veins, false to the ancestors from whom I am descended, and false to every sentiment of my own heart. I stand, then, at all hazards, for the Constitution and the Union, one and indissoluble, now and forever.

[2d and 6th Resolutions, offered by W. W. GREENOUGH.]

**2. Resolved,** That it would be folly to deny that there has been, and still is, danger to the existence of the Union, when there is prevalent so much of a spirit of disunion, constantly weakening its strength and alienating the minds of one part of the people of the United States from another ; and if this feeling be not checked and restrained, and do not give way to a spirit of conciliation and of patriotic devotion to the general good of the whole country, we cannot expect a long continuance of the political tie which has hitherto made us one people ; but must rather look to groups of rival neighboring republics, whose existence will be a state of perpetual conflict and open war.

**6. Resolved,** That men who, directly or indirectly, instigate or encourage those who are or may be the subjects of legal process, to offer violent resistance to the officers of the law, deserve the reprehension of an indignant community, and the severest punishment which its laws have provided for their offence ; and that we have entire confidence that any combination or attempt to fix such a blot upon the fair fame of our State or City, will be promptly rebuked and punished by an independent and impartial judiciary, and by firm and enlightened juries.

[From the Speech of B. R. CURTIS.]

I undertake to say, that men of forecast must then have foreseen, and subsequent events have demonstrated, and it is now known, that without an obligation to restore fugitives from service, Constitution or no Constitution, Union or no Union, we could not expect to live in peace with the Slaveholding States.

You may break up the Constitution and the Union to-morrow; you may do it by a civil war, or by what I could never understand the method or the principles of—what is called a peaceable secession; you may do it in any conceivable or inconceivable way; you may draw the geographical line between slaveholding and non-slaveholding *anywhere*; but when we shall have settled down, they will have their institutions, and we shall have ours. One is as much a fact as the other. One engages the interests and feelings and passions of men as much as the other. And how long can we live in peace, side by side, without some provision by compact, to meet this case? Not one year. Any reflecting man can satisfy himself of this, by turning his mind upon the facts; and history proves it. As early as 1643, when the country was a wilderness, and the movement of persons from one part to another unfrequent and exceedingly difficult, the Colonies of Massachusetts and Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven, found it necessary, even in that primitive and imperfect union which they founded to stay themselves against destruction, to insert an article substantially like this one: "That if any servant run away from his master, into any of the confederate jurisdictions, that in such case, (upon certificate from one Magistrate in the jurisdiction out of which the servant fled, or upon other due proof,) the said servant shall be either delivered to his master, or any other that pursues, and brings such certificate and proof."

But we need not pause upon this very early experience of our New England ancestors. The Government of the United States had not been in operation two years, when the necessity of some such provision, in some form, to preserve the peace of bordering independent States, was clearly proved. You know that in 1789 Florida belonged to Spain, and stretched along the southern border of Georgia. Well, Gen. Washington had not been two years in office when the people of southern Georgia became so uneasy on account of the escape of their slaves across the border into Florida, as to make very urgent representations to the National Government, demanding redress. And thereupon orders were obtained from the Spanish Court to arrest the further reception of the fugitives, and to make restitution; and President Washington sent a special messenger into Florida to see to the execution of these orders.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon this. If any one in this age

expects to live in peace, side by side with the slaveholding States, without some effectual stipulation as to the restoration of fugitives, he must either be so wise as to foresee events in no way connected with human experience, or so foolish as to reject experience and probabilities as guides of action.

I know it may be said, "Let the contest come. We are ready for it. Let the blood of the slaughtered be upon the heads of those who are in the wrong." When I look abroad over a hundred thousand happy homes in Massachusetts, and see a people, such as the blessed sun has rarely shone upon—so intelligent, educated, moral, religious, progressive, and free to do everything but wrong; when I call to mind its admirable Constitution of government, and that it comes as near to perfection as the lot of humanity permits; when I remember that these things are the free gifts of that awful Being, who holds peoples and nations in the hollow of his hand, I fear to say that I should not be in the wrong to put all this at risk, because our passionate will impels us to break a promise which our wise and good fathers made, not to allow a class of foreigners to come here, or to send them back if they come.

With the rights of those persons I firmly believe Massachusetts has nothing to do. It is enough for us that they have no right to be *here*. Our peace and safety they have no right to invade; whether they come as fugitives, and being here, act as rebels against our law, or whether they come as armed invaders. Whatever natural rights they have, and I admit those natural rights to their fullest extent, *this* is not the *soil* on which to vindicate them. This is *our* soil—sacred to *our* peace—on which we intend to perform *our* promises, and work out for the benefit of ourselves and our posterity and the world, the destiny which our Creator has assigned to *us*. So far as He has supplied us with the means to succor the distressed, we, as Christian men, will do so, and bid them welcome, and thank God that we have the means to do it. But we will not act beyond those means; we will not violate a solemn compact to do it; we will not do it by holding up our hands and swearing to render a verdict according to the law and the evidence, and then knowingly violate that oath; we will not plunge into civil discord to do it; we will not shed blood to do it; we will not so throw away the rich gifts which He has conferred upon us, not for our benefit alone, but in trust for the countless generations of His children.

In my judgment, these are not means which He has confided to us to enable us to succor the needy and the oppressed of other States, and, so far as depends upon me, these means shall never be used.

[From the Speech of B. F. HALLETT.]

I am aware, Sir, that I may be supposed to stand here somewhat in a representative character from the personal relations I hold to a party always national in its principles and measures wherever the Union is concerned ; and I may be pardoned for saying, that to be associated with and to deserve the approbation of its true men, is the dearest and highest ambition of my heart. It becomes me, therefore, if in my power, to say and do nothing that shall be unworthy of them or of this great occasion ; and I feel the strongest assurance that however imperfectly I may discharge this trust, I can commit them only to themselves and to their cause, when I pledge that party, as far as I may, to the Constitution, the Union, and the whole Country !

It is good, then, for us to be here to-day. There are occasions, and assuredly this is one, when it is well to forget that we belong to parties or sections, and to remember only that we are citizens of the United States.

The purpose of this meeting and the spontaneous call of five thousand names which combines so much of the moral, physical, pecuniary, and intellectual strength of this community, all point to the Union, its preservation and the supremacy of its laws.

Though no man severs himself from his party by coming here to-day, nor pledges himself to any new one, yet every right-minded citizen must feel that there are occasions in which his country rises above all party, and when the true men of all parties are bound to unite in an expression of public sentiment that shall give renovated strength to the bonds of our Union, and renew the solemn vows and engagements we have made, and which our fathers entered into for us, that whenever and wherever a question arises between Union and disunion, law or no law, a section of the country or the whole country, we will be found on the side of the Union, the laws, and an united country.

Such occasions have presented themselves before to-day, to test the strength of the Union and the supremacy of an unpopular law over a popular sentiment. I mean unpopular in one section and popular in another section of these States, and in all these crises the laws and the Union have triumphed over all local or sectional interest arrayed against them.

Mr. President, just about eighteen years ago, one of the most numerous and weighty assemblages that ever gathered in this hall since the revolution, came together to pledge themselves to the support of the Constitution and of the laws for the collection of the tariff revenue, then threatened with nullification by a single southern State. Then Massachusetts insisted on the enforcement of a law which she regarded as essential to her property and industry, but which South Carolina detested.

Now, the threatened nullification comes from Massachusetts upon a law which she may dislike, but which not only South Carolina, but the whole South, insist is vital to the protection of their property and industry. And shall Massachusetts nullify that law, is the question?

But it is said that there is no crisis and no call at present for a demonstration of the friends of the Union, and that there are no disunionists in New England! If, indeed, there be none, then are we all unanimous for the Union and for upholding its laws, and it surely can do no harm to proclaim it to the world and from Faneuil Hall, that we are the friends of the Union, ready to abide by and sustain the laws of the Union, and anxious to remove all disturbing causes that may here or elsewhere tend to its dissolution. In a word, that we go not only for the integrity of the Union, but for the *peace* of the Union. But are we sure that the Union is safe while extremes North and South continue to agitate and indulge in mutual criminations, and especially while we see in our midst a strong attempt making to direct public opinion in the course of what is termed by its advocates a peaceful resistance to law, but which can be peaceful only just so long as all who do not oppose a certain law permit these peaceful mobs and meetings to have their own way in prostrating that law, and substituting for all laws they happen to dislike an undefined "higher law," of which every man is to be his own expounder, and to act as judge, jury, and executioner!

Sentiments that have gone forth from this hall, or from any place or meeting in Massachusetts, adverse to the Union or the supremacy of law, should not be allowed, unrebuked, to form one jot of the public opinion of this Commonwealth, and should be met with an unequivocal expression of the friends of the Union who mean by the Union, the *whole* Union, and by the laws we are sworn to maintain, the *whole* laws. And we are here to-day for the purpose of calmly and resolutely giving that expression as citizens of the *thirty-one* United States, and as lovers of the Union without distinction of party.

This alone is a sufficient reason for the call that has brought together this large assemblage.

If it be said that the Whig party is the party of Union, and that alone can preserve it—that the Democratic party is the party of Union, and that only can uphold it,—so much the better for the country. Then the Union will be safe whichever party may predominate in the nation, and surely if both the great parties have the same aim and end in view in preserving the Union, they will have more strength when both unite together in that sacred purpose, and they will present an impregnable barrier in every section and in every State against the encroachments of those who may seek to undermine the Constitution or divide the Union into sectional, conflicting, geographical parties.

But on the other hand, if a democratic sectional party, or a whig sectional party, or an exclusively sectional Southern or sectional Northern party should predominate, or even hold the balance of power in the Union, who would guarantee its endurance for a single session of Congress.

We cannot shut our eyes to facts unless disposed to be wilfully blind. During the longest session in which the Congress of the United States have been together in our history, this very question of Union and disunion has engaged their whole attention. They have at last brought about a series of compromise acts as peace measures, which, like the compromises that established the Constitution originally, are believed to be the only means that can perpetuate the Union; and now the question for us to-day is, whether we will in good faith abide by and carry out these peace measures, or whether we shall rush into renewed agitation, and sink the whole useful legislation of the country in a sectional conflict, which all the signs of the times indicate cannot continue much longer, and we remain, as we now are, one people.

The single fact that these peace measures of compromise are denounced by the extremes of both sections, is the highest evidence that they are such as the patriotism and good sense of the calm and considerate should approve. If we go to either extreme, and that prevails, it must inevitably shatter the Union. If we stand on the middle ground, we stand on a platform broad enough to cover the whole country, and strong enough to uphold and sustain it, without a single fragment being broken off.

And now what higher or holier purpose can call together the citizens of the United States, in all its cities, towns, and borders, than to renew our pledges to stand by the Union, and the laws, at this time and in these days, when we find in one section of the Union its value not only calculated, but pronounced worthless, and in another section resort is had to a new form of moral treason, which assumes, by the mysterious power of an unknown "*higher law*," to trample down all law?

If ever the legacy of Washington to his countrymen had meaning and purpose, it now comes home to us in his solemn warning to "*indignantly frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate one portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which bind together the various parts.*"

Who that loves his country can conceal from his judgment the conviction that there has come upon us, not only the *dawning* of this attempt, but its progress almost to the meridian, and if it is suffered to reach the point of its political culmination before its decline, that decline can only happen with the decline and fall of the American republic.

[From the Speech of S. D. BRADFORD.]

And why, permit me to ask, must the Constitution, the charter of our liberties, the work of Washington, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, and of the other illustrious statesmen and sages who formed it, be destroyed? The answer is, because according to them it contains an article opposed to what is called in the cant of the day "the higher law," which forbids, they allege, the restoration to his master and owner of a fugitive slave. We have been living under this article of the Constitution and under the law of 1793, made to enforce it and signed by Washington, fifty-seven years, and until very recently have heard of no complaint against it; but now all at once the cry is raised by some persons that it is unconstitutional, and must be resisted even unto blood, and to the dissolution of the Union. Where, let me inquire, have these fanatics with such tender consciences been living during all this long period? Have they, like Rip Van Winkle, been asleep in the Kaatskill mountains, not twenty, but fifty-seven years, and they have just awoken on the eve of the recent elections? I have remarked on former occasions that the qualms of their consciences have been periodical, as Kean the actor once said the taste for Shakspeare was in Boston; and they were always most distressing a short time previous to the second Monday in November.

But have they read the Fugitive Slave Bill of the last session, and compared it with that of 1793? If they will do so, they will find it rather a recognition of an old law with the addition of certain needful amendments, than a new one. It was not passed hastily, as some have asserted, but was discussed in the Senate during four long summer days from the 19th to the 23d August, section by section, and received the sanction of some of the greatest and best men in the nation. The yeas and nays were many times called for, and the latter seldom exceeded eleven, whilst the former were double or treble that number. The opposition to it in the Senate, so far as one can judge by a report of the speeches, (I do not say it invidiously, was feeble and inefficient. The impression left upon the mind of the reader is, that the gentlemen who spoke against it were acting under a *restraint*, perhaps imposed by the Legislatures of the States to which they belonged.

"But no individual in the Senate," to use the words of Mr. Clay, "was hardy enough to maintain that a Fugitive Slave ought not to be returned to his owner and lawful master."

Should any one be of the opinion that parts of the Fugitive Bill of 1850 are more stringent than that of 1793, he should remember its enactment would not have been called for, had the old law been enforced in accordance with its true spirit, and as Washington, who signed it, intended it should be. Do you, can you be-

lieve for a moment that it would have been sustained by Mr. Clay, General Cass, Mr. Foote, and by the other distinguished statesmen in the senate who advocated it, had they believed it unconstitutional or unjust? Who does not know that the law of 1793 has been pronounced constitutional by Chief Justice Taney, by Mr. Justice Story, and by many other profound jurists who might be named; and as respects the Bill of 1850, Mr. Webster, who long since was proclaimed the "Defender of the Constitution," and has now acquired, and justly too, the honorable title of "Champion of the Union," has not only declared it to be constitutional, but has also said "that no one whose opinion was worth regarding, has pronounced it otherwise." The same opinion has been given by the distinguished counsellor Mr. Curtis, to whom we have all had the pleasure of listening to-day, and who, every citizen of Boston knows, holds the very first place in his profession here. He must be a bold man, who would venture to oppose his individual opinion to such authority as this. But then the objection is made that if the Fugitive Slave Bill be constitutional, it is after all opposed to what is called the "higher law." This phrase "higher law," perverted as it has been by fanatics, is fast becoming a byword. Its real meaning is nullification, repudiation, or abolitionism; and we all know what these words mean. But may not a law be too high?

I remember to have seen in a conspicuous place in Florence, in Italy, an elevated column surmounted by a figure of Justice with the scales; and I also remember that a citizen of Florence passing by it, and seeing a foreigner gazing at it, is said to have remarked to him that "*Justice was so high in Florence that no one could reach it.*" The same charge, I strongly suspect, may be made against the *higher law* of the Nullifiers and Abolitionists. It is *above* justice, for it refuses to return the property of our brethren of the South when found within our precincts. Well! what then, fellow-citizens, is to be done in this crisis of our public affairs? Does any one believe that the South will continue to remain in the Union unless the Fugitive Bill be carried into effect according to its true spirit? Can we expect it; or should we respect our brethren in the South, were they to remain indifferent spectators of the violation of the law? It must, then, be carried into effect—"peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must"; or the Union will be dissolved, and the nation will be plunged into all the horrors of anarchy, and probably of civil war. Can it be that we have those amongst us, and American citizens too, who would raise their parricidal hands against the blessed Union, the work of our forefathers, and the foundation of that noble structure erected upon it, the United States of America? It is difficult to realize it, or at any rate that they can be found in Massachusetts, the State which struck the first blow for liberty and independence in 1775. But if it be otherwise, and the spirit



of disunion and fanaticism cannot be extinguished in any other way, we all remember what was done in 1833 by that hero, patriot, and statesman, President Jackson, during a crisis in some respects resembling the present, and how nobly the country supported him, both Whigs and Democrats. The proclamation he issued will never be forgotten by Americans, and will ever hold a high, if not the highest, place in the archives of the nation. But he was prepared, and *determined too*, to execute the laws by the other means, had that appeal proved insufficient. Let the memorable words which he used then, "*the Union, it must be preserved*," be our watchword now ; and let us frown indignantly upon every one (whatever may be the party name under which he may range himself,) who would lay his sacrilegious hands upon the ark of our safety, the Union of the States. Let us no longer inquire so much of candidates for office, are you Whigs or Democrats—are you for protection or free trade—for a large expenditure of the public money for internal improvements, or a small one ; but rather let us put these questions to them, are you for obeying the laws of your country, or for breaking them—are you in favor of jeopardizing the Union by a further agitation of the slavery question—or will you do all you can to give peace and quiet to the distracted country, of which it stands so much in need. Let us support them or otherwise, according to the answer they may give.

In this way only may we still preserve our glorious and once happy Union, and hand it down with all its blessings to succeeding generations.

[From the Speech of RUFUS CHOATE.]

I concur then, *first*, fellow-citizens, with one of the resolutions, in expressing my sincerest conviction that the Union is in extreme peril this day. Some good and wise men, I know, do not see this ; and some not quite so good or wise, deny that they see it. I know very well that to sound a false alarm is a shallow and contemptible thing. But, I know, also, that too much precaution is safer than too little, and I believe that less than the utmost is too little now. Better, it is said, to be ridiculed for too much care, than to be ruined by too confident a security. I have then a profound conviction, that the Union is yet in danger. It is true that it has passed through one peril within the last few months—such a peril, that the future historian of America will pause with astonishment and terror when he comes to record it. The sobriety of the historic style will rise to eloquence—to pious ejaculation—to thanksgivings to All mighty God—as he sketches that scene and the virtues that tri-

umphed in it. "Honor and praise," will he exclaim, "to the eminent men of all parties"—to Clay, to Cass, to Foote, to Dickinson, to Webster—who rose that day to the measure of a true greatness—who remembered that they had a country to preserve as well as a local constituency to gratify—who laid all the wealth, and all the hopes of illustrious lives on the altar of a hazardous patriotism—who reckoned all the sweets of a present popularity for nothing in comparison of that more exceeding weight of glory which follows him who seeks to compose an agitated and save a sinking land.

That night is passed, and that peril; and yet it is still night, and there is peril still. And what do I mean by this? I believe, and rejoice to believe, that the general judgment of the people is yet sound on this transcendent subject. But I will tell you where I think the danger lies. It is, that while the people sleep, politicians and philanthopists of the legislative hall—the stump, and the press—will talk and write us out of our Union.

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If you concur with me that there is danger, you will concur with me in the *second place*, that thoughtful men have something to do to avert it; and what is that? It is not, in my judgment, fellow-citizens, by stereotyped declamation on the utilities of the Union to South or North that we can avert the danger. It is not by shutting our eyes and ears to it that we can avert it. It is not by the foolish prattle of "O! those people off there need the Union more than we, and will not dare to quit." It is not by putting arms akimbo here or there and swearing that we will stand no more bullying; and if any body has a mind to dissolve the Union, let him go ahead. Not thus, not thus, felt and acted that generation of our fathers, who, out of distracted counsels, the keen jealousies of States, and a decaying Nationality, by patience and temper as admirable as their wisdom, constructed the noble and proportioned fabric of our Federal system. "O! rise some other such!"

No, fellow citizens—there is something more and other for us to do. And what is that? Among other things, chiefly this—to accept that whole body of measures of compromise, as they are called, by which the Government has sought to compose the country, in the spirit of 1787—and then, that henceforward every man, according to his measure, and in his place, in his party, in his social, or his literary, or his religious circle, in whatever may be his sphere of influence, set himself to suppress the further political agitation of this whole subject.

Of these measures of compromise, I may say in general, that they give the whole victory to neither of the great divisions of the country, and are therefore the fitter to form the basis of a permanent adjustment. I think that under their operation, and by the concurrence of other agencies, it will assuredly come to

pass, that on all that vast accession of territory beyond and above Texas, no slave will ever breathe the air, and I rejoice at that. They abolish the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and I rejoice at that. They restore the fugitive to the master—and while I mourn that there is a slave who needs to run, or a master who desires to pursue, I should be unworthy of the privilege of addressing this assembly, if I did not declare that I have not a shadow of doubt that Congress has the Constitutional power to pass this law just as it is, and had no doubt before I listened to the clear and powerful argument of Mr. Curtis to-night, that it was out of all question their duty to pass some effectual law on the subject, and that it is incumbent on every man who recognizes a single obligation of citizenship, to assist, in his sphere, in its execution.

Accepting, then, these measures of Constitutional compromise, in the spirit of Union, let us set ourselves to suppress or mitigate the political agitation of slavery.

*And in the first place*, I submit that the two great political parties of the North are called upon by every consideration of patriotism and duty to strike this whole subject from their respective issues. I go for no amalgamation of parties, and for the forming of no new party. But I admit the deepest solicitude that those which now exist, preserving their actual organization and general principles and aims—if so it must be—should to this extent coalesce. Neither can act in this behalf effectually alone. Honorable concert is indispensable, and they owe it to the country. Have not the eminent men of both these great organizations united on this adjustment? Are they not both primarily national parties? Is it not one of their most important and beautiful uses, that they extend the whole length and breadth of our land, and that they help or ought to help to hold the extreme North to the extreme South by a tie stronger almost than that of mere patriotism, by that surest cement of friendship, common opinions on the great concerns of the Republic? You are a Democrat; and have you not for thirty-two years in fifty, united with the universal Democratic party in the choice of Southern Presidents? Has it not been your function for even a larger part of the last half century to rally with the South for the support of the General Administration? Has it not ever been your boast, your merit as a party, that you are in an intense, and even characteristic degree, national and unionist in your spirit and politics, although you had your origin in the assertion of State rights; that you have contributed in a thousand ways to the extension of our territory and the establishment of our martial fame; and that you follow the flag on whatever field or deck it waves?—and will you, for the sake of a temporary victory in a State, or for any other cause, insert an article in your creed and give a direction to your tactics which shall de-

teach you from such companionship and unfit you for such service in all time to come?

You are a Whig—I give you my hand on that—and is not your party National too? Do you not find your fastest allies at the South? Do you not need the vote of Louisiana, of North Carolina, of Tennessee, of Kentucky, to defend you from the redundant capital, matured skill, and pauper labor of Europe? Did you not just now, with a wise contempt of sectional issues and sectional noises, unite to call that brave, firm and good OLD MAN from his plantation, and seat him with all the honors in the place of Washington? Circumstances have forced both of these parties—the Northern and the Southern divisions of both—to suspend for a space the legitimate objects of their institution. For a space, laying them aside, and resolving ourselves into our individual capacities, we have thought and felt on nothing but slavery. Those circumstances exist no longer—and shall we not instantly revive the old creeds—renew the old ties, and by manly and honorable concert, resolve to spare America that last calamity, the formation of parties according to geographical lines?

I maintain, in the *second place*, that the CONSCIENCE of this community has a duty to do, not yet adequately performed; and that is, on grounds of moral obligation, not merely to call up men to the obedience of law—but on the same grounds to discourage and modify the further agitation of this topic of slavery, *in the spirit in which, thus far, that agitation has been conducted*. I mean to say, that our moral duties, not at all less than our political interests, demand that we accept this compromise, and that we promote the peace it is designed to restore.

Fellow-citizens, was there ever a development of sheer fanaticism more uninstructed, or more dangerous, than that which teaches that conscience prescribes the continued political, or other exasperating agitation of this subject? That it will help, in the least degree, to ameliorate the condition of one slave, or to hasten the day of his emancipation, I do not believe, and no man can be certain that he knows. But the philanthropist, so he qualifies himself, will say that slavery is a relation of wrong, and whatever becomes of the effort, conscience impels him to keep up the agitation till the wrong, somehow, is ended. Is he, I answer, quite sure that a conscience enlightened to a comprehension and comparison of all its duties impels him to do any such thing? Is he quite sure that that which an English or French or German philanthropist might in conscience counsel or do, touching this matter of Southern slavery, that that also he, the American philanthropist, may, in conscience, counsel or do? Does it go for nothing in his ethics, that he stands, that the whole morality of the North stands, in a totally different

relation to the community of the South from that of the foreign propagandist, and that this relation may possibly somewhat—aye, to a vast extent, modify all our duties? Instead of hastily inferring that, because those States are *Sister States*, you are bound to meddle and agitate, and drive pitch-pine knots into their flesh and set them on fire, may not the fact that they are *Sister States* be the very reason why, though others may do so, you may not? In whomsoever else these enterprises of an offensive and aggressive morality are graceful, or safe, or right, are you quite sure that in you they are either graceful, or safe or right? \* \* \* \* \*

No, fellow-citizens—first of men are the builders of empires! Here it is, my friends, here—right here—in doing something in our day and generation towards “forming a more perfect Union”—in doing something by literature, by public speech, by sound industrial policy, by the careful culture of fraternal love and regard, by the intercourse of business and friendship, by all the means within our command—in doing something to leave the Union, when we die, stronger than we found it,—here—here is the field of our grandest duties and highest rewards. Let the grandeur of such duties—let the splendor of such rewards suffice us. Let them reconcile and constrain us to turn from that equivocal philanthropy, which violates contracts—which tramples on law—which confounds the whole subordination of virtues—which counts it a light thing that a nation is rent asunder, and the swords of brothers sheathed in the bosoms of brothers, if thus the chains of one slave may be violently and prematurely broken.

[From the Letter of DAVID HENSHAW, Nov. 23, 1850.]

It surely is time that all good and patriotic men, regardless of former divisions, step forward to sustain the Union, now assailed by a spirit of fanaticism, faction, and anarchy—a Union that cost to establish it, the blood and treasure, the anxiety, toil and suffering of the revolutionary war—a Union that has given to our own people peace and security, wealth and prosperity, and has afforded a safe abode and a happy home to immigrants from other lands.

The slave question is made the wedge to divide us, the great bone of contention. Groundless complaints are conjured up by artful, vigorous, and ardent minds to alarm the timid, the uninformed, and misinformed, and to impel them on by fears to destroy our national compact, and even our nationality, for the vain purpose of redressing ideal wrongs, and of removing imaginary evils, or evils, if real, that do not weigh on those who foment the excitement, and in the correction of which they have no right to meddle.

In examining this slave question, it will be seen that slavery was planted in the American colonies by the policy and power of the mother country, against the wishes and remonstrances of the colonists ; and this condition of the two races, the white and the black, the condition of master and slave, existed on the achievement of our independence, and continued on the establishment of our nationality. In forming the present Constitution, the pre-existing right of the master to his slave was recognized ; to secure that right more completely the provision was inserted for the surrender of slaves fleeing to other States. It was never contemplated in the Constitution to invade the authority of the States to manage their local affairs, or the right of defining the powers, duties, obligations, and political condition of the residents within their borders.

The present generation in the slave States, both white and black, were born to this inheritance. The condition of master and slave descended to them from the colonial state, and be the system good or evil, they are not responsible for its existence, and if responsible for its continuance, it is a responsibility to themselves, not to us.

The Constitution guarantees to the master the right of reclaiming his fugitive slave, and imposes upon those to whom he escapes, the duty of surrendering him. Here are plain Constitutional rights and duties, which the Act of Congress of 1793, approved by Washington, was intended to enforce and make effective, and which it did enforce until within a few years. When that law was rendered ineffective, it matters little from what cause, it became the duty of Congress to provide an efficient substitute. The present Fugitive Slave Bill, against which so much clamor has been raised, and such rebellious and bloody resistance has been threatened, was designed for this purpose—for the purpose of sustaining undisputed Constitutional rights, of enforcing well-defined Constitutional duties ; and this result will no doubt be reached if the law be fairly and honestly executed, and reached, it is believed, without practically invading the Constitutional rights of any one. At any rate, until repealed, it ought to be obeyed and enforced. Fearful, indeed, would be the consequences to our colored population, if blood should be shed, as some have rashly advised, in resistance to its execution.

If our Constitutional duties to give up the slave be thus imperative, is not a sound and wise policy equally urgent to keep the colored population from us ? Do we want in any way to encourage the immigration of the colored people ? What would be the effect on the white population of this State of the influx of half a million of negroes, possessing all the political rights of the white man ? It could not be otherwise than disastrous, perhaps fatal, to one or the other race ; for experience teaches that

the two races cannot exist together on terms of equality—equality of numbers and of rights. Strife, if not bloodshed, would inevitably follow such a condition of our population, until the superior race obtained the mastery. In St. Domingo and Liberia, where the negro bears rule, he yields to the white man no political power. \* \* \* \*

A high and imperative duty, a wise and sound policy demand of us the fulfilment of all our Constitutional obligations. Every attempt to evade these obligations, to resist the laws for enforcing them, should be frowned down, repressed by the irresistible force of public opinion. The fair fabric of our Government, our glorious Union, glorious for the good it has done and the happiness it still promises, the hope of man the world over, must be sustained at all hazards; and for one, I am prepared to make this the paramount political object, superior to party ties, above local and personal considerations.

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*Extracts from the Speech of ALEX. W. BUEL, in defence of the Constitution and the Union, at Detroit, Nov. 19, 1850.*

But, gentlemen, we hear it constantly said “there is no danger.” What do people expect? Shall we look for signs in the heavens to warn us of the future? Must an earthquake come to arouse us from our slumber? We go about inquiring “what new advices?” Can anything be more new, than that Americans should be debating the dissolution of the Union? We may meet the danger when it is actually upon us, but it may then be beyond our control. It may then be too late. It is far wiser to prevent than to combat the dangers of the future.

Our greatest cause of danger is our blindness to our actual condition and to the events that are passing around us. We have seen Congress unable to legislate for a period of nine months. The wheels of government were almost stopped for the want of appropriations. For a long period the government, with all its officers, civil, military, and executive, was without money. The army was unpaid; the navy was unpaid; our foreign ministers were unpaid; and, in fact, every branch of the government was threatened with dissolution, not by the sword, but by simple stoppage. Conventions have been held, one after another, all over the country, some for Union and some for Disunion. The laws of the Union are threatened with resistance in the South and with resistance in the North. \* \* \*

Whilst such is the fearful progress of disorganization about us, we may be able to measure the *present*; but who can mea-

sure the *future*? Who can tell, when and where it is to stop? From what is passing around us we should draw some useful lessons. Our danger springs not so much from the adoption of aggressive measures against either section of the Union, as from threatening and agitating them. Agitation has brought us to our present condition, without the adoption of that measure, which our Southern brethren regarded with so much hostility. But there is now a renewed agitation, started upon a more dangerous basis than the former. If persisted in, who can tell to what point it may drive us, that shall be short of anarchy and civil war—civil war, not only with our Southern brethren, but at last with ourselves?

I am aware, fellow-citizens, that I have used strong language; but supineness and timidity are unequal to the times. I may err in my apprehensions of the future. I wish I could be assured of it. But if I do, I err in common with the ablest and wisest statesmen and patriots of the land. They have thought and declared that there was and is danger. I have read the warning language of McLean, that "there is enough in the general aspect of our affairs, if not to alarm, at least to admonish us, that every cord which binds us together should be strengthened."

I have seen Cass standing up, like the strong oak of the forest, breasting the storm of sectionalism from the North and the South; and there too, side by side, and shoulder to shoulder with him, stood Clay and Webster. To this list might be added the names of Cobb and Boyd, of Dickinson, Douglas, Houston, Foote, and many others, too numerous to mention, of both political parties and both sections of the Union. I have seen all these with true patriotism leaping over the boundaries of party, forgetting all personal or party feuds, and mingling their voices in one common effort to turn away the storm. Ought we, my friends, to hesitate in following their patriotic example?

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*Extract from the Speech of REV. DR. TAYLOR, Professor of Didactic Theology in Yale College, delivered at the Union Meeting at New Haven, Dec. 25, 1850.*

Mr. President and Fellow-Citizens:

I should be extremely happy to say something on this interesting subject, that shall subserve in a trifling degree the interests of my country. I am happy to be here. I am glad to listen to what I have heard. I am glad to witness peculiarly



the indifference to party ties, when the great interests of the nation, as these depend upon the spirit of the constitution and laws of the country, are in issue. Long enough has this subject been trifled with. Long enough have the enemies of law and order had this subject all on their own side, and reasoned it all the wrong way. I am therefore most ready to express my hearty approbation of the resolutions on the table, and as heartily my entire dissent and unqualified disapprobation of all those attempts to degrade that article in our constitution upon which so much has been said, and to trample on the law, which all Northern men are bound in good faith to stand by and support to the very last. I say in good faith; and I ask if the compact made between the Northern and the Southern States—independent sovereignties—was not a lawful compact? Had not the North interests at stake to justify them? I will not go into the question whether slavery is a sin. Be it so, if you please. Had they not reason, and good reason, for entering into this compact? I will make a supposition: suppose Russia with her hordes, combined with Germany, Austria, Prussia, France and England, were threatening to conquer and devastate your country; and there is slavery in Spain; suppose for our own protection and safety, we deem it necessary to enter into an alliance with Spain. Now there are slaves in Spain and in Cuba, and if this combination is made for our protection, Spain says some of her slaves will get among our people, and our people will not deliver them up. War is coming, desolation is coming; it is a sin, if you please, for Spain to have slaves; may we not lawfully, and for our own safety, enter into such a compact, and agree to deliver up these slaves? We have not made the slavery; she is independent, and it is made by her own local laws, in the enjoyment of those rights which she as an independent sovereign has a right to exercise so far as we are concerned. Whether she is right so far as her responsibility to the Judge of the earth is concerned, is another question. But so far as we are concerned, she has a right to make these laws.—What! may I not buy a piece of meat of a butcher because he is profane? May I not make contracts with men whose characters, in some respect, are marred by evil? May I not consult my own safety by numerous acts of a defensive and confederate character, because the men who are engaged with me are not as good as I wish they were? Is this the principle in neighborhoods? Will it do in the family? Will it do better among nations? What right have we to make laws for the Southern States? I am the friend of slaves; I am sorry for slaves; I wish them well with all my heart and soul; and as I wish them well, I say—cease these agitations! Who are the friends of the slaves at the North? The agitators of this subject do more to injure the slaves and perpetuate their chains at

the South, than their true friends can do to terminate the evil for half a century.

As to the higher law principle:—You expect me to admit of course that we are all the subjects of Him who reigns amid the grandeur and glory of eternity; and when his will is known, that we, as moral beings, are bound to submit. There is no question on that point; here is the point—is that article in our constitution contrary to the will of God—contrary to the law of nature, of nations, and the will of God? Is it so? Is there a shadow of reason for saying it is? I have not been able to discover it. Have I not shown you it is lawful to deliver up, in compliance with their laws, fugitive slaves, for the high, the great, the momentous interests of these States? And if it was lawful to do it, is it not in accordance with the constitution to make a law providing for that result? Is there any law of God against this? Is there any law of God against doing lawful things, which every man must do in the course of his life? I do not so understand it. When I learned in the newspapers the novel doctrine that the constitution of my country was in conflict with the law of my Maker—when I first learned it, I said to myself, is it possible that from the high places—from our political halls—our halls of legislation, a man in a high and honorable situation ventured to propound such a doctrine as that? The thought struck me that perhaps he was not counting without his host; perhaps I too was imperfectly informed; perhaps at the North there is a degree of infatuation and fanaticism of which I had not dreamed. In these visions of my fears I almost seemed to see carnage, blood and revolution over the land. I felt very much as if I had heard a summons to rebellion; I felt very much as if I had heard the cry of revolt sounding through the land, entering every dwelling, and seen the standard of revolt waving on every hill. And, sir, there is no want of tendency in that doctrine, to give full reality to these anticipations and these forebodings. Let the doctrine be inculcated—let it be believed at the North—let the northern conscience, whether perverted or unperverted, receive such a doctrine, and what may we expect? We may expect rebellion and intestine war. And when I think of the morality, the ethics of this subject in our religious newspapers, and in pulpits which have been given up to those who choose to advocate this doctrine; and when I think how little truth and argument have been employed on the other side, I see, or seem to see, the curse of war over the Union, and directed against the power of law, and against every principle upon which the fabric of our nation's greatness and glory depends. Thus far we have passed through the storm; I trust it is over; I am afraid it is not; I am afraid there are evils yet to come—but I think the prospect brightens; I do think that we have reason to believe, that

though surrounded with distracting causes and influences, the people are coming to right views, and that here we have indications that the God of our fathers cares for us. He is, I trust, restraining the madness of the people, and in his own good time, amid the roaring of the tempest, he will say to the winds—cease, and to the waves—be still! Stand, then, my fellow-citizens, by law! stand by the constitution of our country! That constitution,—why, sir, like the atmosphere around us, it blesses us every breath we draw; we walk, we sleep, we exist every moment under its influence. What would become of us if the constitution were trampled in the dust? No, sir—as has been said, so say I, with all my heart and soul, if any of my fellow-citizens do not value the constitution enough to defend it, they are not worthy of the blessings it gives them.

[Resolution.]

*Resolved*, That we know of no higher law as a rule for political action, than the constitution of the United States, and we have no sympathy or fellowship with men who instigate or encourage a forcible resistance to the constituted authorities of the country; we hold such men to be mischievous members of the community, and justly deserving the severest penalties which the laws have provided for their offences—and that those who claim to be too conscientious to yield their obedience to the laws of the land, should remove themselves to some other country, whose institutions they prefer, and not avail themselves of the benefits of the Union whilst they repudiate its obligations.

*Extract from the Message of GOVERNOR WRIGHT, of Indiana,  
December 31, 1850.*

In pursuance of a Joint Resolution of the last session of the Legislature, a block of marble, native of the State, was procured and forwarded to Washington, to be placed in the monument now in progress of erection there, to the memory of the father of his country.

The General Assembly did not authorize any sentiment to be placed on the block. I took the liberty of having inscribed the following:

“Indiana knows no North, no South, nothing but the Union.”

I did so, because I believed, as I still believe, that the sentiment thus engraved on enduring marble, was written also on the

hearts of our people ; that it was the sentiment of the great mass of my fellow-citizens of Indiana on the most agitating question of the day.

Complete unanimity is rarely the incident of human councils. In a confederacy like ours, differing as its members do, in soil, climate, and productions ; in habits, manners, and social relations ; in local and sectional interests, it could not be expected now, any more than at the birth of our Federal Constitution, that any compromise, based upon mutual concessions, should be satisfactory to all.

It is not a practical question whether those measures of peace, recently framed by great and good men, in the same spirit which actuated our fathers in days gone by, are, in every respect, such as meet our unqualified approval. It has been well said, that the lives of the best of us are spent in choosing between evils ; and it is often a bounden duty to endure a temporary and incidental evil for a permanent and inherent good. A domestic institution, forced upon our forefathers in colonial days, rather than voluntarily adopted by them, is, for the present, the necessary policy of our Southern brethren. Any sudden abandonment of that policy is impossible. Even its gradual relinquishment is beset with difficulty and embarrassment. The patriots of the Revolution, convened to frame a government that has endured for three quarters of a century, has spread over half a hemisphere, the blessings of peace, of political and religious freedom, and of national prosperity, assented to the great principle that each State of the Union is sovereign, as to her internal government and her social relations. Without this recognition, absolute and unconditional, the thirteen original States would never have concurred in the federal compact. That was the great conservative element which bound hearts, though it could not reconcile opinions. Without that element the Union would not have been created then. Without it, the Union cannot be preserved now.

Indiana, a central State, has always maintained a high, conservative position, especially on that exciting question of the day, which has threatened, more seriously than any other, the integrity of our confederacy of States. She is, indeed, convinced, that she has wisely selected her own domestic policy. She is satisfied with the degree of prosperity which, under that free policy, she has attained. Our State was the nineteenth admitted into the Union. In wealth, in agricultural and commercial importance, she is now the fifth, if indeed she be not the fourth. Of the eighteen States which composed the Union when we were admitted, four, at most, are now in our advance ; and not one of those since admitted has come within sight of us. Maintaining her position ahead of all her younger sisters, Indiana has walked quietly in advance of fourteen of the older States.

In our onward progress we have uniformly acted toward each, equal to equal. Our compacts with the Great Confederacy to which we belong, and every member of it, have been faithfully kept in letter and in spirit. Neither by legislative act, nor otherwise, have we withheld from any citizen of the Union the rights which, under the federal compact, are assured to him. To this day no cause of complaint has been given: nor, so far as I know, has complaint been made, against Indiana, by any State in the Union.

Above all, Indiana recognizes the imperative duty, by every good citizen, of obedience to the laws of the land.

Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the late compromise measures enacted by Congress, however ultra men in the North or in the South may oppose or denounce them, there is but one course of action for the true patriot to pursue; and that is, unhesitatingly and in good faith to carry out their enactments.

There is no safety for property, for liberty, nor for life, except in the absolute supremacy of the law. There is no higher duty of the citizen than to maintain, by word and deed, that supremacy. As we value the heritage, rich beyond all price, purchased not with silver or gold, but with the life's blood of the good and the brave—that heritage bequeathed to us by our fathers, and which we, in turn, must bequeath inviolate to our descendants—let us bear in mind this great truth, that the first public act of disobedience to law is the first fatal step on the downward road to anarchy.

The Constitution of this great Confederacy, written on parchment, may be rent asunder, if it be not written also on the hearts and affections of the people. It is written on ours. We love, we respect it, we give it our highest sanction, alike for the sake of the sacred principles, guardians of human liberty, embodied in its provisions, for the unnumbered blessings we have enjoyed under its rule; and in memory also of that band of great and good men who conceived and established it. This truth should be understood by our people, that this Union cannot be preserved by force. If it could, it would not be worth preserving. The bonds and ligaments that bind us together are moral, and not physical. Our glorious Union is one of consent, and not of force. It is a Union of confidence, of trust, of love, and of affection. When these are gone, the Union loses all its attraction and value.

At no hour of our history have we required, more than at the present, an infusion into our councils of that spirit in which the articles of our confederacy were first conceived. As Representatives, as citizens of Indiana, as citizens of the United States, we have difficult, delicate, important duties to perform. Foremost among these is the obligation to oppose, by every law-

ful means, that spirit of factious fanaticism alike suicidal wherever it has birth, which insidiously assumes the garb, in one section, of philanthropy, in another, of State rights. By speech, by action, by concession, by forbearance, by compromise, by the influence of moral suasion and the strong power of kindness, by each and all of these means, let us seek to allay the spirit of lawless misrule—that spirit which installs each man's opinion the arbiter of constitutional rights, or which coolly estimates the value of this Union, and looks with steady eye on a separation of these States, the certain herald of bloodshed and a thousand horrors, a separation to be surely and speedily followed by war, in its most odious form—servile, perhaps, as well as civil,—war among those of the same race, the same name, the same blood—war that shall bring together in hostile array, neighbor against neighbor, brother against brother, son against sire.

To avert calamities so direful, Indiana will cast, even to the last, the entire weight of her influence. She will be just to each and every member of the confederacy—just to the Constitution—just to the laws. She will abide by that Constitution—abide by the laws; and above all, she will abide by the compromises made by our fathers—the compromises made by the great and good men of this day. She will hope, she will pray, that the same kind and overruling Providence which watched over our fathers at the adoption of the Constitution, and has sustained in every crisis and cheered in every hour of darkness since, will direct their sons also in the paths of wisdom and of peace, and enable us to transmit to posterity that sacred instrument, a guide and a blessing in the Future, as it has ever been in the Past.

Indiana takes her stand in the ranks, not of *Southern destiny*, nor yet of *NORTHERN DESTINY*. She plants herself on the basis of the Constitution; and takes her stand in the ranks of *AMERICAN DESTINY*.

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*Extract from a Sermon by REV. G. F. KETTELL, of the Methodist Episcopal Society, Poughkeepsie, N. Y., delivered on Thanksgiving Day.*

The Congress of the United States, during its last session, passed a law providing for the arrest of Fugitive Slaves, and their restoration to their masters.

This law has caused unusual excitement at the North, and has been assailed by very strong, and, in some instances, intem-

perate opposition. In some quarters, violent resistance has been threatened, should occasion require its being executed. The threat of resistance I regard as wicked and abominable, answering no end but to exhibit the ferocity and madness of those who make it, and exposing them to the just indignation of all good citizens. Opposition to the law in any form, we regard as utterly unjustifiable, except on one of the two grounds which we have before stated, viz., either that it is contrary to the law of God, or that it is contrary to the constitution. But we have endeavored to show that individuals are not to presume either of these cases upon their own responsibility. We have no right to presume a law morally wrong which is required by the constitution, for thereby we offend against the general sense of the nation, unless we are prepared to show that the nation has repudiated the constitution. If this Fugitive Slave Law be demanded by the constitution, we cannot judge it abstractly. The question is not, would it be right if taken by itself? but is it right as part of the constitution? If the constitution, as it stands, is upon the whole the best that the circumstances of the nation admit of, we are morally bound to submit to every part of it. We cannot make our conditions with the government, and say we will obey the constitution if this part be excepted; other men may deem it wicked to sell rum, and refuse subjection to a government which legalizes the rum traffic; others may except to other portions, and where would such a course end? If it is, as a whole, the best that can be, it is supreme law for the whole nation by the authority of God, and every man is morally bound to submit to every law required to carry out its provisions. The only proper question then is, is this law constitutional? and we have already shown that no man has a right to presume otherwise, until a competent authority has so decided; certain it is that no such decision has as yet been had; on the contrary, the highest judicial officer of the land has given his opinion that it is in accordance with the constitution. Here then we might rest our argument. This law is the law of the land, and every man is morally and religiously bound to render it respect and submission. But though we may not presume to accept of a law, purely upon our own judgments, it may nevertheless be gratifying to satisfy our judgments that it is what it is declared to be, constitutional; and in the opinion of the nation, not contrary to the law of God. I believe this law to be constitutional—not upon my own judgment alone, for I have reason to distrust my own judgment upon a matter of this kind—but because it has been so declared by the ablest men of this nation, some of whom gave it their sanction in Congress, and others of whom have approved of it since. The President of the United States has signed it; the Attorney General has given an official opinion, approving of it; and it has been denied by no one that I know, except men who understand

a great many other things better than they do law. I have endeavored to understand this law, and, in my humble judgment, can see no reason to doubt what so many able men have affirmed. I do not consider myself any high legal authority, but will, nevertheless, venture to state my views.

That the *object* of this law is constitutional, no one can doubt. The constitution does, beyond all question, recognize the right of property in Slaves, and it guarantees to every man the enjoyment of his lawful rights. But it would be a manifest violation of such guarantee to allow men to be dispossessed of their property, whether in slaves or otherwise, contrary to the laws of the State in which they live. The very design of the constitution is to secure equal rights to all, without respect to state lines. Hence, if it recognize a slave as property, and that without respect to the place he may be in, it must guarantee unto the master the lawful possession and service of his slave, wherever he can find him. The lawful claim of the master is not vitiated by the removal of the slave a certain number of miles, but in the eye of the constitution the slave is his, wherever he can establish a legal title to him; and it follows that the constitution must protect him in the enforcement of his claim, in whatever part of the United States the slave may be. It accordingly makes provisions that "no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another State, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due." The constitution does not create slavery; it simply guarantees that the laws of one state shall not be annulled by the people of another state, and that therefore a slave under the laws of one state shall not cease to be a slave by the removal of his person into another state. It is to carry out this object of the constitution that this obnoxious law has been passed.

But we apprehend that the chief objections to this law lie against the manner in which it provides for the accomplishments of its object. The law provides that the owner of a fugitive slave, or a person holding power of attorney from him, may, under a proper warrant, bring such fugitive before any court or judge of the United States, or any commissioner appointed by the courts of the United States, when it becomes the duty of such judge or commissioner to hear and determine the case in a summary manner; and upon satisfactory proof being made as to the identity of the person, and also as to the fact of his being really and truly a slave, to authorize the claimant to take the slave back to the place which he fled from.

It is objected to this mode of proceeding that it does not allow the slave to test the question of his slavery before a jury, but upon the mere proof of his identity, and that upon the affidavit



of the opposite party, he is delivered up. We observe upon this objection, that the constitution is the highest law of the land—supreme above the common law, and above the statute laws of the several states. If it shall appear that the constitution contemplated this mode of procedure, it is idle to say that it is contrary to the ordinary mode of proceeding in a property question under the common law. Whatever may be the *ordinary* mode of proceeding, if the constitution has provided *for this particular case*, the question is settled. Judge Story, the highest law authority perhaps in this country, thus speaks upon the clause of the constitution under which this act was passed. Says he, “It is obvious that these provisions for the arrest and removal of fugitives contemplate summary ministerial proceedings, and not the ordinary course of judicial investigations, to ascertain whether the complaint is well founded or the claim of ownership be established beyond controversy. In the case of suspected crimes, the guilt or innocence of the party is to be made out upon his trial, and not upon the preliminary inquiries whether he shall be delivered up. All that would seem to be necessary in such cases, is, that there should be *prima facie* evidence before the executive authority, to satisfy its judgment that there is probable cause to believe the party guilty, such as upon an ordinary warrant would justify his commitment for trial. And in the cases of fugitive slaves, there would seem to be the same necessity, of requiring only *prima facie* proofs of ownership, without putting the party to the formal assertion of his rights by a suit at the common law. Congress appears to have acted upon this opinion; and, accordingly, in the statute upon this subject, (law of 1793,) has authorized summary proceedings before a magistrate, upon which he may grant a warrant for a removal.” Such was the opinion of Judge Story, twenty years before this law was passed.

Again, it is said, that the constitution itself provides that “the trial of all crimes shall be by jury,” which, it is said, this law violates. Those who quote these words should read the next—“and such trial shall be held in the State where the said crime shall have been committed.” If it is a crime for a slave to run away, he certainly commits the crime in the state where he runs away, and it is there that by the constitution he must have his trial; and surely there is nothing in this law to prevent it.

Again, it is said, that this law deprives the slave of the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*. This writ is a remedy against unlawful imprisonment. Any man put in prison or held in confinement, except under the sentence of a court, may apply to the Judge having jurisdiction, who forthwith issues a writ of *habeas corpus*, requiring such person to be brought before him, and cause to be shown why he was put in confinement. But

after the sentence of a court, having ultimate jurisdiction, adjudging a man to imprisonment, there can be no such writ issued, for then the man is in custody according to law; and in the language of the Attorney General, "it is not within the province or privilege of this great writ to loose those whom *the law* has bound." It is not intended to nullify laws, but to prevent imprisonment contrary to law. Now those held as slaves under the laws of the United States, clearly cannot take out a writ of *habeas corpus* to try why they are held as slaves, any more than a man in the State Prison can take out such a writ to try why he is held in custody. *The laws have already decided it.* In both cases the person is in custody *by authority of law*, and it is surely absurd to talk of suing out a writ of *habeas corpus* to *make the law show cause* why it has put a man in custody. In the case of a fugitive slave, it is indeed necessary to prove that he is a slave before his custody is lawful. Accordingly, should a person be arrested on this plea and held in confinement, without due steps being taken to test the question of his slavery, a case might arise when a writ of *habeas corpus* would be had, and in such a case there is nothing whatever in this law to prevent the suing out such a writ. But by the provisions of this law, the *person is not held in confinement*, but is brought at once before a Judge or Commissioner, who is bound to hear and determine the case in a summary manner, and give to the claimant, (if his claim be established,) lawful authority to take his slave, after which a writ of *habeas corpus* can of course have no force. Mr. Crittenden, the Attorney General, after discussing the law at some length, thus speaks:—"I conclude by repeating my conviction, that there is nothing in this bill which conflicts with the constitution, or suspends, or was intended to suspend, the privilege of the writ of *habeas corpus*."

But perhaps the strongest feeling of opposition has been expressed against that clause of the law which makes it the duty of citizens to assist in its execution, and empowers the officer having charge of its execution, to summon the by-standers to his aid, should circumstances render it necessary. Upon this clause of the law, a loud and pathetic wail has been raised, that free citizens are exposed to the liability of being degraded into *slave catchers*; and to hear some men talk, we might all expect to be summoned from our beds to hamstring negroes, and to see troops of screaming slaves flying through our streets, pursued by ruthless savages, with pistols and bloodhounds, and to be ourselves required to join in the ferocity of the hunt. Now, those who raise this terrific complaint should remember that citizens are at all times liable, in case of any obstruction to the laws, to be called on to aid in their execution. In case of riot, or the arrest of an escaped convict, or suspected criminal, every

citizen is bound by the law to obey the sheriff or constable, who may demand his assistance. But from whom is obstruction to this law to be feared, if at all? Why only from those who now clamor against it. If they will not oppose the law, there will be no need of any one to assist the officers in its execution. With the negroes alone they will be perfectly competent to deal. It would indeed be very revolting to one's feelings to be called on to assist in arresting a slave. But, practically, what does this provision amount to? How many of all the gentlemen who now tremble in their shoes, for fear of being required to lay hands on a slave, have ever been called on to assist in arresting a criminal. Probably not one in a thousand of all the people in the United States, ever saw a criminal arrested, and probably not one in a thousand of all the people in the United States will ever see a fugitive slave arrested.

But who are the men who make the loudest opposition to this law? Why, the men, (I say it more in sorrow than in anger,) who have themselves, in a great measure, created the necessity for it. Men who, in violation of the Constitution which they have sworn to maintain, wantonly invaded the rights guaranteed by the Constitution to their fellow-citizens—who, not content to wash their hands of slavery with their countrymen of the North, have gratuitously followed it to the South, and by inducing the slave to rise against the laws and escape from his master, have been instrumental in spreading the curse over the land. And through their wicked and officious meddling, **SLAVERY NOW EXISTS AT THE NORTH**, when, but for them, it might have existed only at the South. It is asserted that there are at this hour, three hundred lawful slaves in the city of Boston, and thousands more scattered throughout all the Northern States. Whose fault is it that this curse now exists among us, but theirs who have invited it here? And if Northern men are now to be brought into contact with it, and to be slave catchers, who among them have so little reason to complain as these men themselves? They have brought the curse among us; they should not shrink from the work of removing it out of our sight. They have wrought the mischief; they, if any, should be willing to work the remedy, and thus make some little atonement for the wrong which they have done the North.

Had they acted before God as good citizens and christian men, in accordance with the principles of the Gospel and the example of Christ and his Apostles, and shown respect and submission to the laws, we should not have now been put to the loathsome necessity of contaminating our fingers with slavery; and we repeat it, no northern men have so little reason to complain as those who could not keep their fingers away from it, when placed by the law beyond their legitimate reach. A slave running away from his master, is none the less a slave under the

constitution. Wherever there are lawful slaves, there is slavery, and if from the enticement of slaves to the North by northern men, Congress has been constrained to reassert and confirm this undoubted provision of the constitution, and thus practically to revive slavery at the North, whose fault is it, I again ask, but theirs who have brought it here? This obnoxious law is but the result of a constitutional necessity growing out of the transportation of slaves to the North.

Before concluding these remarks, I wish to allude to an objection brought against this law, on the ground that it is contrary to the Scriptures. In various quarters a passage has been quoted from Deut. 23, 15, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee, &c." Those who quote this text should remember, that most able commentators regard this text as referring to the slaves of another nation escaping into Judea; such were not to be delivered up. Dr. A. Clark has this comment on the passage—"that is, a servant escaping from an idolatrous master, that he might join himself to God and his people—otherwise it would have harbored him." A slave escaping into Judea from one of the surrounding nations was not to be delivered up; and such is to this day the law of nations, and the law of the United States. When a few years ago, a number of slaves escaped to this country from the West Indies, in the Spanish vessel *Amistad*, they were, by a decision of the United States Court, set at liberty, and were, I believe, only demanded by the Spanish authorities, on the ground that the vessel was not within the waters of the United States when she was taken possession of. So that this passage of scripture so triumphantly quoted against this law, is at this moment the law of the United States. That slaves escaping from one tribe to another among the Hebrews were not to be delivered up, has not been shown. But whatever might have been the regulation upon this point, it could not have affected very materially the condition of the slave, for slavery existed in all the tribes, and that with the express sanction of God, as is evident from Lev. 25, 44, &c. "Of the heathen shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids; moreover, of the children of the stranger that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families which are among you, which they begat in your land, and they shall be in your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession."

In the New Testament, although the writers all lived under slaveholding governments, we find nothing forbidding the restoration of fugitives, if the civil law required it. On the contrary, St. Paul says, "Let as many servants (or slaves, as the word properly signifies,) as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor."

One of the canonical books of the New Testament, the Epistle to Philemon, is a letter written by St. Paul to a slaveholder, and sent by the hands of a fugitive slave, in which the Apostle says, that he had sent the slave back, as without the master's consent, he considered it wrong to keep him, and asks the master to forgive him for running away. I do not allude to these texts and instances as arguments. I do not think that anything that can be found in scripture has any very conclusive bearing upon the subject in hand. The circumstances of the age and country are so different, that we can infer nothing from them with certainty. But if men will quote Scripture against this law, we have a right to show what the Scriptures actually say.

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We stand perhaps upon the eve of great events. What may be in the future, no man can tell. Certain it is, that the wisest and best in the land discern dangers gathering upon the sky. It is a time for the Patriot to be thoughtful and for Christian men to pray. Let us look with devout hearts to the God of our Fathers, that as he guided them in the day of their peril, he may now guide their sons through the difficulties which thicken around their path. Let us not wantonly stir up the elements of discord anew. We may kindle a fire that will indeed extinguish the Fugitive Slave Law, but which will at the same time consume all that is beautiful and fair in this goodly land. Let us, in the fear of God, reverence the laws. Let us stand by the Union. The breath of fanaticism blowing from the North, and blowing from the South, has swelled into a fearful gale, which threatens to engulf the Constitution. The noble ship is reeling before the blast. It becomes all on board to have cool heads and true hearts. May God give her a good deliverance, and may all the people say Amen.

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*Extract from a Sermon by JOHN C. LORD, D. D., of the Central  
Presbyterian Church, Buffalo.*

**"THE HIGHER LAW" IN ITS APPLICATION TO THE FUGITIVE SLAVE BILL.**

As citizens of this State, and of the great Republic of which it is the chief member, we are called to consider the preservation of public tranquillity, the adjustment of sectional difficulties, and the continuance of the bonds of our Union, amid excitements which threatened its integrity ; amid a storm, the ori-

ginal violence of which is manifest in the clouds which yet obscure our political horizon; in the deep toned thunders that are yet muttering in the distance. It is not necessary to adopt the opinions of the extreme alarmists in either section of the country, to conclude that great dangers have threatened, if they do not still threaten, the Union of these States. It does not require very great discernment to see that the continued agitation of the vexed question of Slavery, producing alienation and distrust between the North and the South, must, in the end, either sever the bonds between the free and the slave States, or render them not worth preserving. A unity maintained by force, if this were possible, would not pay the cost of its keeping. If, in the heat of the existing controversies, these two great sections of the Union come at last to forget their common ancestry, and the mutual perils shared by them in the revolutionary struggle; if South Carolina and Massachusetts, who stood shoulder to shoulder in the doubtful contest for American freedom, come to disregard the voices of their illustrious dead, who lie side by side in every battle-field of the Revolution; if Virginia and New York refuse, in the heats engendered by this unhappy strife, to listen longer to the voice of Washington, warning them in his farewell address of this very rock of sectional jealousy and alienation; if the words of the Father of his country are no longer regarded with reverence in the ancient commonwealth of his birth, or in the great State whose deliverance from a foreign enemy was the crowning achievement of his military career; and if the compromises upon which the Union was consummated, continue to be denied or disregarded; there is an end of the confederacy. If the stronger should crush the weaker, and hold on to an apparent union with the grasp of military power, it would no longer be a confederacy, but a conquest. When there is no longer mutual respect; no more fraternal forbearance; no more regard for each other's local interests; no more obedience in one section to the laws which protect the guaranteed rights of the other; the basis of union is wanting, and nothing but a military despotism, with a grasp of iron, and a wall of fire, can hold the discordant elements together. \* \* \* \* \*

But there is higher authority for the determination of this question than any thing we have yet suggested. The existence of domestic Slavery was expressly allowed, sanctioned, and regulated by the Supreme Lawgiver, in that divine economy which He gave the Hebrew state. The fact is open and undisputed; the record and proof of it are in the hands of every man who has in his possession a copy of the Bible. All the ingenuity and art of all the Abolitionists in the United States can never destroy the necessary conclusion of this admitted divine sanction of Slavery, that it is an institution which may lawfully

exist, and concerning which Governments may pass laws, and execute penalties for their evasion or resistance.

To allege that there is a higher law, which makes slavery, *per se*, sinful, and that all legislation that protects the rights of masters, and enjoins the re-delivery of the slave, is necessarily void and without authority, and may be conscientiously resisted by arms and violence, is an infidel position, which is contradicted by both Testaments ;—which may be taught in the gospel of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and in the revelation of the Skeptics and Jacobins, who promised France, half a century ago, universal equality and fraternity ; a gospel whose baptism was blood, a revelation whose sacrament was crime ; but it cannot be found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or in the revelation of God's will to men. We do not mean to affirm that sincere and conscientious persons may not be found who have persuaded themselves that forcible resistance to slavery is obedience to God ; and that in the increased light of the nineteenth century, the example of the Jewish economy, and the teachings and practice of our Lord and the Apostles, are antiquated and of no binding force upon the consciences of men. Such honest but mistaken persons should remember, that if the institution of slavery is necessarily and from its nature sinful *now*, it must *always have been so* ; as universal principles admit of no change, and their argument is, therefore, an impeachment of the benevolence of God, and a denial of the supreme authority of the Gospel, as a system of ethics. They must, to sustain their position, assume that we are wiser and better men than the Saviour and the Apostles, and that the government of God and the Gospel need revision and emendation. Such a conclusion is inevitable from the premises, and I would affectionately warn all who have named the name of Christ, and who have been betrayed by passion or sympathy into such a position, to see to it before they take the inevitable plunge, with the Garrison school, into the gulf of infidelity. I would respectfully entreat them to remember that this is not the first proclamation, "Lo, here is Christ, or there," which has proved a device of the adversary ; that Jacobins, Fourierites, Communists, and Levellers of all sorts, reject the Gospel on the ground that it does not come up to *their standard* of liberty, equality and fraternity, and has no sufficiently comprehensive views of the rights of man. Those who preach the gospel ought specially to remember that our race are apostate, and live under a remedial government ; and that it is our mission to deal with the world as it is, and men as we find them, just as did the Saviour and the Apostles—remembering that here we have "no continuing city," and that the Gospel does not propose to us an equalization of human conditions in time ; that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," and to this, the Master of life and his Apostles pointed the rich and

the poor, the high and the low, the bond and the free. They made it no part of their work to array the prejudices of one class against another ; to discontent the slave with his position ; or the citizen with the government ; but treated all these things as of inferior consideration, compared with the hope of another and a better life, through the blood of atonement.

The comparative mildness of Hebrew slavery which is alleged, if it were true, is of no moment in the decision of the question before us ; for it is not whether American legislation on this subject be unwise and unjust, but whether the institution of slavery is necessarily sinful, and all legislation on the subject void for want of jurisdiction, and because of a higher law that prohibits its existence.

Domestic slavery, in this country, is older than the Constitution ; it had existed for several generations before the Revolution. The people of the North, in their union with the slave States under a General Government, upon the adoption of a common Constitution, bound themselves to respect the institution of slavery as it then existed, so far as to deliver up fugitives to their masters. What has been said proves, we think, that such an arrangement was not void as being against a higher law, and consequently any legislation by Congress, which fairly carries out this provision, and enforces this guarantee, is constitutional and lawful, and cannot be resisted upon any moral grounds. Whether the law is the *best* or the *worst* that could have been devised, is not the question here, nor is it really the question with the country ; for it is the recognition of Slavery by the Constitution, and the right of recapture which it confers, which lies at the bottom of this agitation ; all the rest is merely for effect, *vox et preterea nihil*, and those who recommend the violation of this law, would undoubtedly advise resistance to any enactment of Congress which would carry out the provision of the Constitution for the restoration of fugitive slaves.

It is somewhat singular that those whose consciences have been so much aroused in regard to a higher law than the Constitution, should have forgotten, in their contemplation of moral and religious questions, that the observance of the compact between the North and the South falls within the moral rule which enjoins good faith, honesty, and integrity among men. Until this compact is rescinded by the power that made it, and by the parties who assented to it, its fulfilment is required by every principle of common honesty. With what pretence of right can the North say to the South, we will hold *you* to your part of the bargain ; *you must remain* in the Union, but we have conscientious scruples in regard to performing our part of the agreement. Is this the language of good faith and integrity ? Would it be thought honest in any private transaction or com-



pact? Is it for those who threaten the South with force in case of their resistance of Constitutional enactments—who are themselves advocating the violation of the laws which protect the rights secured to the slave States by the Constitution—to talk about higher laws and sensitive consciences? Does the assertion, so often made, that there is no danger of disunion if the law of recapture is violated; that the South are not strong enough to set up for themselves; that they need the protection of the North to prevent a servile insurrection, add any thing to the moral beauty of this position? What is this but the divine right of lawless force, the higher law of the strongest? What is this but a disavowal of all regard for the claims of the weak? In the words of a Highland song of the olden time,

“For why? because the good old rule  
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,  
That they must get who have the power,  
And they must keep who can.”

May Vermont be permitted to pass laws to evade and prevent the execution of the legislation of Congress, and South Carolina threatened with investment by sea and land, by the army and navy of the United States, for doing the same thing? Is this good faith between sovereign States? Nay, is it common honesty among men? “I speak to wise men, judge ye!”

If we are comparatively so much stronger than the South, as is alleged, is it magnanimous, is it just, for us to take advantage of their weakness, to violate their constitutional rights? If they look upon the greater prosperity of the North with a degree of jealousy, and are the more sensitive on that account upon any appearance of a disregard on our part, of the guarantees of the Constitution, there is the more reason for our forbearance; especially when it is considered that in the very formation of the Union, there was an implied understanding that good will and forbearance should characterize the intercourse of the parties; “that Ephraim should not vex Judah; or Judah Ephraim.”—Why should the Saxon obstinacy of the North and the Norman pride of the South be forever excited by these unhappy disputes in regard to slavery; a question which time, and patience, and God’s providence can alone resolve? The South are not so dependent upon us as we imagine; in the case of a servile insurrection they would hardly look for aid, in the present state of things, from the North, and our constant allegations of their weakness constitute one ground of their dissatisfaction; and one temptation to a separation, that they may prove to the North and the World that they can take care of themselves. They have the old Norman temper; the blood of the Chevalier predominates over that of the Puritan in the southern States, and they would rather see their territory desolated with fire and sword than yield a single point of honor—than to feel, much less to

acknowledge, that they are dependent upon the North for protection against their own slaves. It is evident that the great body of the people at the South are attached to the Union, and will not readily yield it; but it is equally manifest that they have demagogues and traitors there, who desire to exercise dominion and lordship in a Southern Confederacy that shall extend from Virginia to Cuba; who, like some at the North, would rather be Presidents and Secretaries by a division of the country, than to be out of office by its continued union.

If such men would boldly announce their design, if they would form an anti-union party, and present this question of a revolution in our government and an abandonment of our Constitution before the people, it would go far to dissipate the danger which threatens the Republic, and to quiet the perpetual agitations that are wearing out the strong bands that hold us together. For whatever allegations may be made that there is no danger of disunion; whatever cries of "peace, peace," may be reiterated by men who are doing what they can to nullify their own predictions, we may be assured there is treachery and danger all around us. The separation of large communions of Christians into Northern and Southern Churches was one of the first signs of evil omen to the country. But two of the leading Protestant denominations remain united.\* I thank God that one of them is the Presbyterian Church, who are still one in form and fact, in heart and spirit, from New York to New Orleans, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, having long since met this question and settled it, finally and peacefully, upon Gospel principles. The constant agitation of the slavery question at the North, the untenable positions assumed, the fierce denunciations, the bitter revilings, the contumelious epithets which have been heaped upon our Southern brethren and all who would not consent to unite in a crusade against them, are producing their legitimate fruits of alienation, distrust and hatred. If no positive proof exists of a conspiracy among certain hot-headed and ambitious demagogues at the South, to dismember the Union; that a Southern Confederacy may be formed, which will make them all great men; yet, it is manifest that such a design has been formed, either with or without concert, among a class of abstractionists there, who are co-operating with the abolitionists, at the North, to agitate and inflame the public mind, until a revolution is inevitable. The recent settlement of the vexed sectional questions, which was hailed by the country with confidence and hope, is sought to be disturbed not only by denunciation, but by a violent resistance of the laws enacted, and this, too, before sufficient time has elapsed to test them. Every kind of phantom is conjured up; visions of free men forcibly hurried

\* The Protestant Episcopal and the Presbyterian.

